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THE END OF THE AXIS

The splendid fact of Italian surrender is announced simultaneously with the news of the immense Soviet successes in the Don Basin. While the Germans hear that the first and largest of the satellite Powers has thrown in her hand, they must also be wondering whether the Russian armies may reach Kiev before the winter; how soon the new factory areas in Austria and South Germany will be devastated from the air; how long Bulgaria, Hungary, Rumania and Finland will survive as their allies; whether their troops south of the Plain of Lombardy will escape; and at what points the next Allied blows will fall on the fortress of Europe. Some will recall the swiftness of the German collapse after the surrender of Bulgaria in September, 1918. It would be foolish to make any prophecy about the effects of these and other desolating reflections on the German mind, because the German Army is still intact and immensely powerful. All we can say is that the moral as well as the military map is transformed by the collapse of Italian resistance, and that the German army is now certainly subjected to the same double strain of military defeat and internal pressure as in 1918.

We all rejoice that the Italians have ceased, in the conventional sense, to be our enemies. In the real sense the mass of Italians have never been haters of this country, nor indeed have they ever been at heart a military people, even during their fleeting period of imperialism. The underground movement has never been destroyed, though it had no chance, until Allied victories shook the regime, of openly expressing the common detestation of Fascism. Before Mussolini left the scene he admitted that strikes had been widespread in Turin and Milan, and the popular cry for peace has been continuous during the Badoglio government. It is a misfortune that bombing has continued in Italy for five days after the surrender. The conditions (which must always be present in any surrender, whether called unconditional or not) are still undisclosed. The situation within Italy remains complex and obscure. The Italians are now in the position of any country occupied by Germany and invaded by liberating forces. It is not certain how far revolutionary change has already gone in Italy. In negotiation the Badoglio government seems mainly to have been prompted by terror of Germany, but fear of revolution, used as a bargaining weapon with the Allies, has also been a factor. The problems of Amgot, and of permitting the free forces of Italy as soon as possible to reorganise their own country, now confront the Allied Command. The active aid of the workers of North Italy, and, above all, of the transport workers who command the communications, may, if properly used, prove an important factor in hastening the end of the war. Even more difficult problems arise in the Balkans, where Italian divisions, now no longer officially at war with the democracies, confront German troops with whom they are at bitter enmity, as well as occupied peoples whom they were supposed to police. The events of the next few days will no doubt clarify the situation. We are content at the moment to express our rejoicing at an event which brings victory closer and gives Mr. Churchill and Mr. Roosevelt, authors of a great Allied victory, the chance to show that they have qualities of statesmanship as well as military leadership.

BASIC ENGLISH

Mr. Churchill on a day's vacation from the job of winning a world war, has made a remarkable proposal for the future. The historian whose style most nearly resembles Gibbon's is an advocate of Basic English. His speech at Harvard has made it an issue in world politics, and lest we should suppose that he spoke on impulse, the newspapers assure us that a Cabinet Committee under Mr. Amery has begun to investigate its claims. They lost nothing in the telling as this master of words set them forth. Inciting Harvard to persevere in its researches into the uses of this universal language, he described that great university as "the headstream of what might well be a mighty, fertilising and a health-giving river." That is, we take it, Mr. Churchill's way of saying that it would be a great convenience, if we could understand the first stranger in every port we touched. That would render travel both easy and instructive. There are other obvious gains. Basic English would facilitate trade and especially British trade. It would also serve the ends of science, for simple manuals can be written in it, with some slight additions to its recognised vocabulary. It is also claimed for it that it will make for peace, since it will be universally used to dissipate misunderstanding. Much depends, however, on what a man has to say in this convenient medium. The stinging rebuke which Mr. Cordell Hull addressed to the Argentine Government on the day Mr. Churchill spoke would have been a rather less polished document had it been written in Basic English, but it might have been a good deal blunter and much more offensive. With 850 words at our disposal few of us could convey our sentiments with delicacy.

With one half of the claim put forward for Basic English we are in complete agreement. It is a very easy language for a foreigner to learn. Two weeks of hard work, as its inventor Mr. Ogden reckons, might suffice. The pupil's pronunciation might leave something to be desired. He might be tempted to translate the idioms of his mother tongue into it, with disconcerting effects. But a quick-witted Englishman, let us say Mr. Churchill, landing, for instance, at Syracuse, would understand the first Sicilian who brought him fruit and wine with a careful little address in Basic English. Here is a good beginning. But we are not so sure that the Sicilian would understand Mr. Churchill with equal ease. All the foreigner has to do is to learn 850 words by heart. But Mr. Churchill disposes of a vocabulary that may stretch to 250,000 words. We will be modest, however, and estimate it at 100,000. Now, before he left Downing Street, did the Prime Minister take the precaution of memorising the 99,150 words which he must not use? Even if he did, will they not sometimes flock unbidden to his practised tongue? He wishes to say, for example, "We will fight them on the edges of the land." That is impeccable Basic English. But habit is strong. Before he got to the end of the sentence might not the forbidden word "beaches" slip in?

Let us take at random a sentence from the Premier's address at Harvard:

> Twice in my lifetime the long arm of destiny has reached across the oceans and absorbed the entire life and manhood of the United States in a deadly struggle.

Mr. Churchill has a prodigious memory. He remembers, of course, that "twice" does not occur, nor "life," nor "reach," nor "ocean," while "fate" is not included as a possible substitute for "destiny"—and so we might go on. Here is the sentence as this consummate artist might have written it to justify his reception of his doctor's degree:

> Two times in my existence the long arm of history has stretched across the seas and kept all the living things and all the males of the United States in a fearful fight.

The sentence is perfectly "basic," but would it earn the orator his customary meed of applause?

The reader may object to this test: Mr. Churchill is no fit subject for simplification. Then let us become as little children. It shall be a nursery rhyme. "Three blind mice . . ." Worse than ever. "Blind" is not allowed, nor "mouse." The little grey animals without eyes can run after the farmer's wife, but all she had to cut off their tails with was a meat knife. We confess that we have never seen such a thing in our "existence". But let us try again with something as simple, if more classical. "Tiger, tiger . . ." But neither is that animal one of the chosen. The big Indian cat will burn bright enough. We wonder what hand and what eye could make its fearful regularity.

It will be seen that Basic English has its limitations. We will assume, however, that Mr. Churchill has his way. What happens next? The B.B.C. is nothing, if not a loyal institution. It broadcasts to all the earth. Not only Sicilians but Chinese, Russians and Nazis are listening-in. Surely it is its duty to render Mr. Churchill intelligible to them all? Can he refuse to submit his script to be boiled down by its experts into basic pulp? The idea is so sacrilegious that we refrain from pursuing it further. We have our doubts whether Mr. Churchill would submit himself to translation a second time. The rest of us might not fare so well. The Russian bulletin, arriving as usual a little late, might cause some trouble. When that vastly important railway junction was captured the other day, how would the B.B.C. convey the good news? "Connection" is as near as we can get to it. As the years go on, however, we shall grow accustomed to this language. Its hearers will soon be counted in hundreds of millions. Before long a talk in old-world English will be as rare as one in Welsh. How soon will Basic English be appointed to be read in churches? How long will its rival survive in elementary schools? We can see Lord Beaverbrook racing all the peers of Fleet Street for the honour of producing the first basic daily newspaper. The last phase may lie a little way ahead: the best to hope for is that it will not be in our lifetime. What publisher will hesitate, when in one language he can count on a sale of ten million copies, and in the other of ten thousand? The classics, we trust, will be translated: it is doubtful if they will survive in any other form. Scholars, a few centuries hence, will collect the fragments of Mr. Churchill in the original tongue much as they try to assemble the lost books of Livy. Assuredly the mighty fertilising and health-giving river "will flow on, and all the children of men will drink from it". But will it not taste a trifle insipid?

Rendezvous in Cairo

King Peter and the Yugoslav Government are about to leave for Cairo, according to present arrangements. As is pointed out in our Correspondence columns, this is a far more serious development than most people realise. A government of officials, men who are either unknown in their own country or notorious for their close connection with the Prince Paul and Stoyadinovitch regime, leaves here so as to be "nearer to the scene of war." Yet all reports from Yugoslavia itself indicate that this government will get a stormy welcome if it ever reaches Belgrade. Its very appointment was greeted at home as "the second funeral of Yugoslavia," and a democratic Britain is held responsible for its existence. For no Serb, Croat or Slovene believes that the young King, despite his great powers under the Alexander Constitution, would have dared take such a step without strong British support. Where did this support come from? Surely, not from the Foreign Office. Mr. Eden can hardly consider this to be a good start for discussions with Mr. Maisky on Anglo-Russian understanding in the Balkans. There are certainly some in the War Office who with their usual contempt for politicians seem to think that King Peter's action now gives them a free hand. But both they and those "influential" Britishers who have exerted their powers on the Queen Mother of Yugoslavia should not forget that they are dealing a serious blow at British prestige in South-Eastern Europe.

If the Yugoslav King and Government reach Cairo, they will meet there the Greek Government. Undoubtedly they will compare notes about British democratic methods. For the Greeks are also wondering whether they, too, are going to be allowed to have the last word in determining the future of their own State. Fortunately, King George was ultimately persuaded some weeks ago to make public his willingness to accept the decision of the Greek people as to whether they wanted him back or not. This, at least, saved our faces. But it would be a good thing if, instead of so many British speeches being devoted to praise of democracy, we applied a little more of that spirit in our dealings with the Balkans. Perhaps this would ease our difficulties when talking to the Russians.

Mr. Curtin's Proposals

Mr. Curtin's first utterance since his sweeping victory in the Australian elections should set us all thinking. We are apt to be complacent about the British Commonwealth. The fact that the Dominions fight hard against Nazis and Japanese does not prove that they are satisfied with its methods of transacting business. Hitherto, Westminster talked to Canberra, Ottawa and Pretoria, one at a time. It was done with good manners as between equals. None the less, both sides knew that 45 million talked to seven, eleven and two million separately, and that behind the bigger partner were the Bank of England and the Fleet. What Mr. Curtin proposes is the creation of a council, meeting at frequent and regular intervals. Sitting together, the Dominions' populations will add up to a more nearly equal figure. More important still, he asks for a permanent secretariat, which would keep the Council always in being. Modestly enough, he is content that his Council shall be, at least in name, consultative. This reminder has surprised some conservatives, who believed that the chief merit of the Commonwealth was its informality and its lack of any institutional structure. That suited Westminster, but it seems that Canberra is no longer content to be merely informed in a whisper. She expects to be consulted, and she asks for a round table. When she gets it, as infallibly she will, the Commonwealth will be transformed, much as the old concert of Europe was, when it evolved into the League of Nations.

War and Politics in South-East Asia

Chinese reactions to the appointment of Lord Louis Mountbatten to the South-East Asia Command show that there is considerable satisfaction in Chungking at this evidence that the Allies intend an early offensive in Burma. But the Chungking press also emphasises the point made in the article by a Burmese, published last week in this journal. *Hsin Su Pao*, a Szechuan daily, suggests, in a tone that reveals some anxiety on this matter, that Lord Louis will be concerned with wider Allied interests than the mere recovery of Imperial territories. The Kuomintang paper, *Chungyang Jih Pao*, while rejoicing that the new Command is the first step towards the general intensification of the war against Japan, also insists that its task must not be confined to a counter-offensive in Burma. Some concern is expressed lest the expected operations should prove to be another exercise in mechanical text-book warfare. The Chinese have not forgotten the debacle of 1941-2, nor are they happy about the course of recent events in India. Their experience during six years of war with Japan has shown the urgent necessity of inspiring the largely peasant masses of the East with that hope of national liberation which can turn them from passive hostility to active friendship. Therefore, *Hsin Su Pao* writes: "... we hope that the British will make a change in their Far-Eastern policy. In addition to winning the war militarily, they should try to win it politically, for it is contradictory to Allied peace aims, as well as to their war aims, that Britain should fail to win the war politically in the East." In China at least there is a realisation that a purely military victory, unaccompanied by any clear conception of a New Deal in the Pacific, would only create new conditions of instability. Criticism of Lord Louis's military capacities may be left to the jealous prejudice of a Colonel McCormick. But radical changes in our political warfare and political behaviour in the East are essential. Though our links with China are frail enough in all but sympathetic sentiment for the mass of the Chinese people, the attitude of British Governments to the national aspirations of the other peoples of South-East Asia still seems to range from indifference to hostility. And this in a theatre where an enlightened and intelligent policy would be at least as fruitful an instrument of war as it can be in Europe.

The T.U.C.

The Trade Unions assembled in Congress this week were able to congratulate themselves on a membership well in excess of six millions at the end of 1942, not counting the Civil Service Unions, which are still prevented from affiliating or the quite numerous small Unions which do not pay dues to the T.U.C. This is nearly as high as the peak figure reached after the last war, when the total was swollen by men returning from the Forces. But the balance of power has shifted a good deal. The bulk of the recent increases is accounted for by the Amalgamated Engineering Union and by the two huge Unions of less-skilled workers—the Transport and General Workers and the General and Municipal Workers. Coal and cotton, which used between them almost to dominate the T.U.C., have shrunk greatly in relative importance, and the post-war strength of the movement depends very much on its success in holding on to the wartime recruits it has gained in the munition factories. This change carries with it a decline in the *intensity* of Trade Union loyalty. The older trades had a stronger sentiment of solidarity than can easily be stimulated among less skilled workers, and such Unions as the T. and G.W. and the General Workers can shed membership almost as easily as they can pick it up when conditions are favourable. As for the policy of this year's Congress, with the issue of the Trade Union Act of 1927 brushed aside for the time being, the interest has centred mainly on the report of the recent mission to the Soviet Union and on the return visit of the Soviet Trade Union delegates. It is a matter of the first importance that the British and the Soviet Trade Union movements shall work together in restoring Trade Unionism in occupied Europe, and that the ban of the reactionary American Federation of Labour shall not be allowed to stand in the way of close association of both the British and the Soviet Unions with the C.I.O. There ought to be a concerted international Trade Union programme for rebuilding European Trade Unionism everywhere on foundations satisfactory to both British and Soviet Trade Union opinion. This is undoubtedly what the bulk of Trade Unionists in this country want.

THE CARDS ON THE TABLE

EXTRACTS have appeared in this country from an article by Mr. Harry Hopkins in the *American Magazine*. After saying that he expected that both Germany and Japan would only be defeated after at least another two years' hard fighting, he remarked that our enemies could "last a long time fighting a defensive war," and added:

> Russia, the keystone of the war, is still fighting grimly. If we lose her I do not believe for a moment that we will lose the war, but I would change my predictions about the time of victory then. Then, indeed, we would have a long war ahead of us.

This remark reads strangely in this country, where speculation about Russia ceasing to fight Germany has never been current as it is in the United States. Much of this speculation can be dismissed as the irresponsible chatter of prejudice and isolationism. But Mr. Harry Hopkins is the close associate of the President, who has visited Moscow twice on behalf of the American Government, and the publication of this article was timed to follow immediately after the Quebec Conference. Mr. Hopkins may not believe in the hypothesis of Russian withdrawal; that he should mention it as a possibility is significant and disturbing.

Speculation is no doubt stimulated by the unprecedented secrecy with which the Soviet Union surrounds its actions. Journalists have no "inside news" to report from Moscow. They move about freely and, within the limits of censorship, can describe what they see. They are given official information, and, if they talk Russian, they may be able to add local colour and personal comment. But Stalin and his close associates make decisions and unless they wish us to have hints of changes of policy, no hints arrive. Some writers in America believe that Stalin has recently uttered warnings as significant as those which passed unheeded in Britain in the spring of 1939. Some regard the attacks on British and American policy that have appeared in the Moscow fortnightly, *War and the Working Class*, as merely so much political propaganda—a form of pressure on the outside world and not an intimation of any possible change of policy. By the same token, Mr. Harry Hopkins, in referring to a possible Russian withdrawal, may have no more in mind than a move in an undercurrent of political warfare such as ought never to occur between Allies. Moscow's creation of a Free German movement within Russia, which offers peace with a democratic Germany, leads to similar differences of interpretation within Britain and America.

These doubts and rumours, of course, are increased by obvious lack of agreement over a large field of war and post-war policy. The list is now only too familiar. There is the question of the Second Front, the absence of Russia at Casablanca and Quebec, the backing which Britain and America give to one resistance movement in Yugoslavia, even while it is actually in conflict with the Partisans who are supported by the Soviet Union, and the difficulties that arise over even such a question as that of associating joint Russian and British Trade Union delegates with Amgot. The list grows longer and is so unpleasantly comprehensive that many people have been wondering whether the alliance with Russia is more than a temporary military agreement, and whether even that might end before the end of the war.

No one can be sure what Russia's policy would be if this lamentable rift were allowed to increase, and we rejoice that at last there is to be a meeting of Foreign Ministers of the three Powers, and that a permanent Allied Commission is promised. There are two points we wish to make. First, on the general question of Russia's intentions, we hazard the following analysis. The Soviet, like all other Governments, maintains more than one line of foreign policy. For years M. Litvinov showed the greatest pertinacity and ability in the struggle at Geneva to maintain and develop a genuine policy of collective security which would prevent war. Since loyalty to the Covenant of the League on the part of the other great Powers at Geneva was always doubtful, Stalin kept in storage an alternative line of policy. After the warning that he gave by the removal of Litvinov and by more than one speech following the Allied refusal of the suggested conference at Bucharest, he finally concluded the Russo-German Treaty of August, 1939. British policy, it should be noted, had followed a more dubious course; we talked Collective Security at Geneva, while we practised the Laval-Hoare Pact, non-intervention in Spain, and the Munich settlement which was an Anglo-German agreement giving Hitler a free hand in Czechoslovakia and against Russia. To-day, hatred of the German invader who has laid waste Russian homes and the achievements of years of unparalleled effort has, in our view, made any "peace" between the Soviet Government and "Hitlerite" Germany completely unthinkable. On that point Stalin has spoken with complete clarity and we have no doubt of his sincerity. Russia, he says, will fight until every German invader is either dead or has left Soviet soil. But that Stalin would adopt an independent course of policy, which might mean that he would cease actively to fight against the Germans when they are driven from Russia, if he still has no agreements with Britain and America, seems to us possible and entirely intelligible. If we interpret Stalin's mind correctly, he desires to see a democratic revolution in Germany, and knows well that he and all the other Allies will, in fact, have to make peace with some German authority when the Nazis are destroyed and the German army defeated. He will prefer to take part in world conferences and share with Britain and America the responsibility for maintaining peace and settling the vast economic and political problems that will then confront the Allies. If, however, he were to despair of agreement, he is in a position to withdraw once again into isolation. This no doubt is what Mr. Harry Hopkins fears. Russia would then maintain an armed frontier against Germany, but would increasingly concentrate on reconstructing her devastated country. The Soviet Union is the one great organised area in the world which has an economic system which would enable her to plan her recovery, and the economic resources for self-sufficiency.

Our second comment is this. There is still time to rule out any possibility of the kind of isolation which Mr. Harry Hopkins fears. The right step of arranging preparatory meetings between the Russian Foreign Minister and representatives from the democracies has been agreed upon. This is indeed a good omen. Realistic agreements on all the outstanding questions of war and post-war policy can be reached. We suggest that the method of reaching them is for Britain, the U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. to lay their cards on the table. There are some interests and some deep feelings of sentiment which animate the West and which are not easily understood in the Soviet Union. Stalin, the realist, will readily realise their importance, if they are stated honestly and with an equally honest understanding of Russian needs. If Stalin can go so far as to recognise the strength of religious feeling in Russia and permit the recovery of the Orthodox Church within Godless Russia, he can also make the adjustments necessary for agreement with Britain and America. But the representatives of Britain and America must on their side make practical proposals which he can examine and discuss. The key to success is to put the cards on the table.

AN INSTALMENT OF INTERNATIONALISM

IN the uneasy years before the war, Axis propaganda delighted in painting a pathetic picture of Germany and Italy as the pauper "have-nots," while Britain and France were the prosperous "haves" sated with colonies from which they drew their excessive luxury. This picture tweaked many consciences, and there was talk of "internationalising" the colonies. It was not very clear what this meant. International administration? That had nowhere been worked really successfully. International supervision? That would mean nothing more than an extension of the Mandates system, which, though useful, was not really solving anything. Did the colonial peoples want to be "internationalised"? What opinions they had expressed were hostile. War broke out, and the discussion died.

A year ago it was revived by Wendell Willkie, from a very different angle. America, and we ourselves, had been shaken by the loss of Malaya and Burma. Stern strictures—whether justified or not—had been cast on British colonial administration in these territories, and American opinion tilted ferociously at that old bugbear, British Imperialism. Willkie went a trip round the world and didn't like all he saw and heard of British "colonialism," as the Americans term it. He called for an end to be put to colonial status within a fixed time schedule—"rule of people by other peoples is not freedom and not what we must fight to preserve." He declared that the British Empire was not a matter for Britons alone. "As Americans we share the responsibility of making the whole world a Commonwealth of Free Nations." The terms of the Atlantic Charter, if nothing else, imposed on America a measure of responsibility and concern.

Last December, when the air was thick with cross-Atlantic recrimination—if mud was to be slung, there were others besides the British to whom it could stick!—and while Mr. Churchill was proclaiming "We mean to hold our own," a semi-official conference on the future of the Pacific was held in Canada. The British delegation, headed by Lord Hailey, staved off the obvious attack which was coming to it by producing, at one of the first sessions, a far-reaching scheme for the establishment of an international Pacific Council. It was an ambitious and exciting proposal. Representatives of all the sovereign Powers in the Pacific would have seats on this Council, which by joint consultation and co-operative action, would secure a common policy for developing the whole region. The Council would maintain its own staff, help in obtaining financial assistance for the weaker territories, and receive reports from the different national administrations, who would thus be made accountable to someone other than themselves for their actions. "It would finally," said Lord Hailey—"and I desire to emphasise this point—be charged with the periodic review of the progress made in the growth of self-governing institutions in the Dependencies and in the improvement of their standard of living." These ideas met with a good response. The round table, which discussed the future of South-east Asia, "was strongly of the opinion that the Regional International Authority should be set up at once without awaiting the termination of hostilities." The Conference was not a fully official one, and no one was committed, but the proposal for Regional Colonial Councils took definite shape.

About the same time General Smuts wrote a widely-publicised article in "Life." He, too, called for a "regional grouping of Colonies," without regard to what mother-countries they happened to belong. The mother-countries would continue to be exclusively responsible for the administration, but common policy would come under the Council, which would consist of all countries "regionally interested for security or economic reasons." Thus the U.S., he suggested, although no colonial power, could be on the regional council of the West Indies or Africa or elsewhere. "It appears to me essential," wrote General Smuts, "that the U.S. should in future have a direct say with the mother-countries in the settlement of general colonial policies, and some such organisation as is here suggested would give

her the necessary status with the rights and responsibilities implied."

Increasingly this idea has been toyed with in recent months—the idea of international collaboration over a whole area, while still retaining national responsibility for individual territories. On one or two occasions the idea was expressed crudely, with more emphasis on the exclusive national responsibility than on the international collaboration, raising immediate unfortunate reactions both in America and at home. But a few weeks ago in the House of Commons, Colonel Stanley stated definitely that the Government now had in mind the establishment of such regional commissions. He made it perfectly clear that each State would remain responsible for administration in its own territories, but there would be permanent machinery for all interested States to work together for the well-being of the region as a whole. This was announced, quite unexpectedly, at the tail-end of a long debate, and members jumped to their feet. "Are we listening to a serious proposal for amendment of our control of the Colonies?" "In what way is it proposed to associate the natives with these Commissions?" "In what regions are these Commissions to be set up?" Col. Stanley had no set answers, and the debate closed in an atmosphere of surprise and puzzlement.

It is clear that a political development of first-class importance is in the air. "We welcome it enormously," said one of the Labour members in the debate. But there are reservations. The first consideration in any programme for colonial areas is the advance of the colonial peoples to self-government. There is no guarantee that even the most perfect international collaboration of the Powers now governing them will automatically ensure that advance. A British-American imperialism, because it is "international," is no more welcome than a British imperialism standing alone. "We will have the Tower of Babel to contend with," one colonial newspaper already complains. And, indeed, unless the colonial peoples are themselves actively associated with the work of the Commissions, they may find themselves in a worse position than formerly—cut off from direct access to the fountain head of power, by the interposition of an intermediate regional authority. There is fear that colonies already well on the way to independence will find their path blocked by this new body, and they themselves denied the exercise of responsibility.

There is another difficulty. There are regions, such as Southern Africa, where a reactionary power may, by its superior size and weight, dominate the Council, and stand in the way of progressive policies. For years, Africans in Central and East Africa have feared the influence of South Africa and the claims of the Kenya settlers. They have opposed all moves to "Closer Union" or "Amalgamation." They would need to be convinced that "regionalism" was something very different.

But it is probably too late now to stem the tide. Embryos are already in existence—there is the Middle East Supply Council, which has functioned effectively, if bureaucratically, in matters of war supplies over an enormous area. There is Lord Swinton, co-ordinating the war effort of all West Africa. There is the Anglo-American Caribbean Commission already busy pooling some preliminary aspects of British and American work in the West Indies. There are all the obvious technical and economic—not to mention military—advantages of these arrangements. The small isolated colonial units could never stand satisfactorily alone—whether "self-governing" or not—in the modern world. It looks as if some form of regionalism has come to stay. The thing now is to see that it should develop along the right lines.

There are a few important principles to be laid down from the start. In the first place, the international authority should be charged with securing the evolution of self-government. That is of the first importance, and if it is missing the scheme becomes nothing but a better and more efficient form of the old imperialism. Secondly, wide publicity must attend its deliberations, so that no barriers are erected between the colonial administrations and public opinion, and dominant powers are limited in their possibilities of exerting "underground" influence. Thirdly, ways must be found for winning the co-operation of the colonial peoples—they must find their place on the Council and in all branches of its work, perhaps through the participation of elected members from their own legislatures. And fourthly, there should be a permanent secretariat responsible to the regional body, and not bound by loyalties to national governments; this is a cardinal principle in the working of any international authority.

If these principles can be secured, we may be witnessing the birth of a powerful new means of international collaboration, able to make a major contribution to world-wide security. Regional councils are, of course, no substitute for a world authority, but they may be the first step towards it. Perhaps by beginning at the bottom in these smaller, more direct, and very practical forms of co-operation, rather than in starting at the apex—as we did with the League of Nations after the last war—a solid, concrete foundation will be laid for the world authority of the future.

RITA HINDEN

A LONDON DIARY

I CANNOT discover that any decision has yet been made about the date of Dr. Benes's visit to Moscow. The Foreign Office, of course, has a case in getting him to postpone it. They argue that to have particular countries making treaties within the general body of the United Nations would lead to all sorts of complications, and that other small Powers, perhaps with less responsible governments, would also follow suit and prejudice the post-war settlement. I do not regard this argument as cogent. Britain and Russia have a 20-year alliance. Dr. Benes proposed no more, I believe, than a renewal of his 1935 treaty with Stalin. I well remember that treaty; I happened to be one of the visitors to Capek's house in Prague on the night when Dr. Benes arrived straight from Moscow and described his reception by Stalin. I shall not easily forget my impression of what the Russian treaty meant to the Czechs; it was half their security and commanded more than half their sympathy. For Czechoslovakia necessarily looks East and West. Russia is its cultural parent. I should have thought that the post-war stability of all Eastern and Central Europe would be greatly improved by a Czech-Soviet treaty, which conforms and does not conflict with the general pattern of the alliance that we are striving to maintain after the war. I know that some of the Poles would object, but then I can think of no diplomatic move to improve anyone's relations with the U.S.S.R. to which some influential Poles would not object. Sikorski's death was a catastrophe.

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Our guest diarist, Mr. Tom Driberg, M.P., referred a few weeks ago in these columns to the fact that "another prominent 18B-er and ex-Link-er has been released from detention," and pointed out that recent releases had followed a revived Parliamentary clamour by Tories of the extreme Right. This remark was taken up by the weekly journal *Truth*, which before the war had violently attacked Sir Samuel Hoare for certain statements made by him about the Link, and since the war has been one of the most pertinacious apologists for its members. It has argued the case both on constitutional grounds, and on the score of the distinguished records of some of the 18B-ers. It attacks Mr. Driberg in its usual language for what it regards as a reference to "the recent belated release from detention of Sir Barry Domvile." The material on which Sir John Anderson acted in making the order for the detention is unfortunately unknown, since the Home Office has not yet taken the expected course of issuing a White Paper setting out the relevant data in the various cases. There exists, however, a public document which is of some general interest, since it throws, if genuine, a light on Sir Barry Domvile's personal reactions a few years ago to the propaganda of the enemies of this country.

The *Daily Mail* in its issue of July 5th, 1940 (p. 3, cols. 3, 4 and 5) reported the trial at Bristol Assizes of an ex-Linker, one Olive Evelyn Baker, who was convicted and sentenced to five years' penal servitude on three charges of publishing and distributing postcards relating to German radio propaganda on the New British Broadcasting Station. The report of her cross-examination refers to a letter she was alleged to have received from Sir Barry Domvile (who was not in any way involved in her offence). Sir Barry's letter is reported to have referred to the New British Broadcasting Station in these terms:

> It is grand. Ramsay asked some questions about it in the House and gave it a good advert.

It seems only fair to ask Sir Barry Domvile if the letter as quoted is authentic. Perhaps *Truth*, in order to see that justice is done to Sir Barry, will use its good offices to get this letter (if authentic) published in full, since the complete text is always more satisfactory.

* * *

Incidentally the reference in the letter to Captain Ramsay (another of *Truth's* protégés) is interesting. The allusion would appear to be to Hansard, 20th March, 1940—when the M.P. for Peebles asked Sir John Reith about certain allegations in German radio propaganda. Captain Ramsay's question gave the exact details of time, wave-length and signature tune of the New British Broadcasting Station. In his libel action against the *New York Times* he was interrogated about this both by counsel and by the judge, and admitted that, though he did not agree with all the broadcasts, he personally thought that the propaganda referred to in his question was desirable, that the question was "got past the Chair," and that he appreciated he was increasing the audience the Germans wanted by specifying what the number was and the time.

* * *

I well remember when the Basque children first came over here that we used to ask ourselves, "What will happen to these children when they grow up?" Most of them were driven out of their homes at ages between twelve and sixteen. Just seven years have passed since the Axis war began in Spain, but the memory of Guernica, the first deliberate destruction of a town and its people from the air, has not been dimmed in our minds by subsequent horrors. The children are now grown up. A correspondent who has followed their progress gives a happy account of them. Some have been welcomed in America and Canada; some of the boys are in factories; others, following the Basque tradition, are fishermen or serving in submarines, or minesweepers, or apprenticed on various types of Allied or neutral shipping. The girls, with the home tradition of their people, tend rather to go into domestic work. You will find them apparently mostly in hostels and hospitals, and a few of them are nursing probationers. My correspondent ends her account by saying ". . . their greatest ambition is one day to work with that outstanding medical figure of their own war, the Catalan Dr. Trueta, whose revolutionary treatment of fractures has saved the limbs of countless soldiers from amputation. A little while before the outbreak of the present war he was invited to this country, and his methods have been widely used in British war surgery. He has recently been honoured by Oxford University for his services to medicine." Here is another bit of the answer to the cynics who would not listen when we told them that ever since the seventeenth century the acceptance of refugees from political oppression has been one of the fertilising and invigorating forces in our national history.

* * *

Geoffrey Crowther, the able editor of the *Economist* is now also editor of a new Monthly magazine called *Transatlantic*. In the first issue he says its purpose is to strengthen British-American co-operation by insistence not on sentimental bonds

but on the national purposes and the strategic interests that they share. He goes so far as to wish them to control permanently the sea routes and air routes of the world—which will sound dangerously insolent to some other quite considerable peoples. How can such monopolistic talk commend itself to either Asia or Eastern Europe? *Transatlantic* has a telling cover, which it too quickly balances with an old-world cartoon by Bairnsfather. The level of articles is high, Ellsworth Huntington and Brogan specially good; also a poem by Ogden Nash at his best. Lots of photographs, and all for a shilling. But in a paper that sets out to be *read*, it is tiresome to find the ends of the articles consigned to a limbo among the advertisements at the end.

* * *

W. W. Jacobs, who died last week, was one of the funniest writers of his age. The obituaries, I thought, were unnecessarily cool, but that is the English way with a favourite comedian. There was no need, if you were an enthusiast, to explain, still less to insist; either he made you laugh or he didn't, and nothing hung on it. A taste for his stories was like a taste, say, for music-halls or bottled stout; those sharing it had an additional lubricant in common. And yet—dipping over the week-end into *Light Freights* and *Many Cargoes*—I couldn't help wishing that someone had made a cult of Jacobs, as Wodehouse, for example, in his pre-Adlon days was taken up by the highbrows. It would have done no harm, and might have added a little to gaiety, if Oxford dons had written monographs on the Supremacy of Woman in Jacobs or the topography of his dockland and country areas. I could never, myself, quite place his cockneyfied countryman—Essex, was it, or Suffolk? The Wapping streets, though, in which he was born, were authentic and delightful; and anyone who has walked on a Sunday through the Minories and Nightingale Lane down to the old High Street will be grateful to Jacobs for the peep he gives us behind those prim frontages. Walnut sideboards and a coveted piano, the glass of wine that looks like port and tastes like red-currant, voices raised against the policeman who has come to live next door, the inevitable matrimonial angle from which the husband emerges, sadly discomfited, to go off to sea for a spell—these are the time-honoured echoes from the age of Plot. Jacobs' plots are always tricky and nearly always good, and he treats them with the cunning of a seasoned card-player who knows all the cards. With a wonderful ingenuity and coolness, year after year, he went on dealing out situations of the order of *Cosi fan Tutte* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*, reducing their complexities to the scope of an easy magazine story. He was a master of sarcasm. I say sarcasm rather than irony, because that is the Cockney form of it, and it was that more than anything that appealed to English readers.

* * *

I hear that the daily press is soon to have a very pleasant increase in its paper supply. I presume that periodicals and books will soon also share in this good fortune. A small fraction of the increase accorded to one big Sunday or daily would make all the difference to publishers of books and weeklies. Another really big user of paper is the War Office. Note the contrast. A small publishing firm, which has maintained a distinguished literary reputation during the war, is rationed to under ten tons a year. The Financial Secretary of the Treasury explained the other day that the War Office alone uses 25,149 tons. Who said something about signing forms in triplicate?

* * *

Here is the answer to a question that interests all of us. According to a press agency report:

Seventeen of the most famous writers, commentators and military analyses in the U.S. have selected July 21, 1944, as the date on which Germany will fall.

This was decided by a poll taken by Columbia Pictures in Hollywood.

I hope this information has been passed on to Himmler.

CRITIC

STONE-WALLING

We may hope and expect that the Newcastle Society of Antiquaries will find support for its protest against the rifling of the Roman Wall for road repairs. It is to be hoped that the two Ministries (Works and Town and Country Planning) that share responsibility will take prompt and active measures to put an end to this scandal.—*Manchester Guardian*, August 30th.

FIRST of Remains, the antiquary's pride,
Remembrancer of Rome Imperial,
The Wall of Hadrian must soon subside
Unless the Government arrest its fall;
So on the Planning Ministry they call
To patch this relic of antiquity,
And though prompt action may not save the Wall
It *would* do something for the Ministry.

The Ministry of Planning, yet untried,
Might welcome any task, however small,
And could by this employment be supplied
With some activity inaugural,
Though it be nothing but an overhaul
And shoring up of ancient masonry,
If only as a Joint Memorial,
It would so *something* for the Ministry.

The Ministry's reluctance to provide
For reconstruction more original,
Its creeping apathy on every side,
Both town and country equally appal,
So death from inanition to forestall,
And save these ruins if they saved may be,
They make representations to Whitehall—
It would do something for the *Ministry*.

Such action could not start a Party squall,
Both sides on Ancient Monuments agree,
Few interests are involved, and after all
It would do something for the Ministry.

SAGITTARIUS

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to Marius Goring.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

SIR,—In reply to your correspondent, Mr. Paul Nichols, who inquires about the music which ends the B.B.C. early morning religious broadcasts in alternate weeks, it is not, as he supposes, played on a concertina, but by the B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra. —KENNETH ADAM, Director of Publicity, B.B.C. —Letter in *Daily Telegraph*.

Wanted. Lambrook School Old Boy's Tie. Advertiser's unavoidably lost.—Advt. in *Times*.

Our dieticians are doing a disservice by including milk and eggs in the necessaries of a minimum diet. The inclusion of these expensive articles of diet swells enormously the number of people said to be too poor to afford an adequate diet and the class conflict is thereby embittered. I am sure that milk is an unsafe food unless it can be got straight from the cow, as the calf gets it. It is also unnecessary. Millions of Chinese and Japanese are reared to healthy manhood without a drop of milk.—Article in *Individualist*.

Shakespeare's portraits indicate that he suffered from scurvy. This is a deficiency disease caused by a lack of vitamin C . . . If only potatoes had formed part of Shakespeare's diet, we might have had works greater even than *The Tempest*.—Letter in *Daily Telegraph*.

Skeleton or part of skeleton required by medical student; also air rifle and talking parrot.—Advt. in *Aldershot News*.

An elderly retired officer REQUIRES HELP on work connected with his farm and in shooting wild fowl during winter.—Advt. in *Times*.

W. IL PAPA RE

IN days past, one was puzzled, travelling in Italy, by the apparent contradiction that Mussolini, whom one very well knew to be named "Benito," had apparently some other name whose initial was "W." Later, it appeared that this was the popular short-hand for "viva," and that "W. Mussolini" was neither a pet name for the Duce, nor an expression of loyalty to another member of the same family, but an expression of general admiration, as when an overmastering ebullition of enthusiasm leads anyone of Republican sympathies in Ireland to chalk "Up, the Rebels" (any rebels will do) on any convenient blank space. Only the very practical Italians had decided that labour-saving should be introduced even into enthusiasm. Hence "W."

Now a new, and yet a very old, figure, the Pope, has appeared—or re-appeared—amongst the rulers of Italy, and the familiar hieroglyph begins to be applied in an unfamiliar setting. Nothing is more uncanny than to see historical landmarks emerging after a temporary eclipse, like watching a half-tide rock heave its shoulders through the waves at a given moment, or a spring, long dry, begin to run in old channels. I write from the point of view of a stern and unbending Presbyterian, and must not be considered as expressing any approval of the phenomena here recorded—disapproval, if anything. But one does not approve or disapprove of the transit of Venus. One records it, and it is necessary to record that the old institution of the Sovereign Pontiff has reappeared in great strength and splendour. Even the Papal States may shortly be expected to follow.

Sovereignty has a very simple hallmark nowadays. It is, any community which has a radio of its own. "The German-controlled radio of X."—how familiar is the phrase and now decisive. Sovereignty, like the spectrum, is now a matter of wavelengths; a band could be drawn out and the rulers of the earth pricked off on so many metres of ether frequencies. It is, indeed, one of the engaging facts of our time that somewhere there exists, in every case, a piece of wire actually corresponding to the lengths one reads on the radio set, which emits the wave in question. The possession of such a piece of wire is the red badge of Kingship to-day, and compared with it, Koh-i-Noors or sceptres are mere crystalline upholstery. Judged by this test there is no doubt about the Papal State. Radio Vatican takes its place unchallenged amongst the transmitters of the world. An unjammable radio—for even to jam Radio Vatican is a greater self-condemnation than anything that such a transmitter could publish abroad.

The Pontiff speaks to other States; and the Italian Government begs other States to listen to him. Which is the ruler? The question does not take long to answer.

The historical arrangement which is reappearing is one familiar to our forefathers over many centuries, and one which would cause them no surprise at all. The Lombard plain is in control of the German Kaiser—and Hitler, to make the reminiscence meticulously exact, is an Austrian. The centre, under the protection of the Pope. And then, at the foot, the Two Sicilies—the Two Sicilies—quite so, one of these has already begun, with the magic W. W. the Sicilian Republic.

Was there not somebody—Metternich—who had a saying about all this—about what eventually became Italy—"a geographical expression." Metternich, also an Austrian. This very simple view continually recurs amongst Austrians—once they get down through the Brenner.

That epigram was conjured away by Garibaldi. But Garibaldi ended by pronouncing a curse on any Italian who should range his country against Great Britain. Italy was eventually ranged by its rulers against Great Britain; and the curse fell, in just over three years. It took the form, which everyone might have foreseen, but no one did. That is, the withdrawal of the achievement of Garibaldi—of the unification of Italy—Italy one country, Italy with its capital, Rome.

The spell breaks, the edifice raised by its power fades away. Out of the Castle of San Angelo, the tomb of a Caesar, steps the Bishop of Rome, acclaimed by the multitudes in the streets—and the Government of Italy, by its own act, leaves the city of the Caesars to—leaves the city of the Caesars to—? Nature abhors a vacuum.

Well, everything is back where it was for so many hundred years. Whether there will be another turn of the kaleidoscope or no, time alone can say. Meanwhile, this generation, which has seen the liquidation of so many things—which has seen the liquidation of the French Revolution—has seen the Blackshirts liquidate the Risorgimento, the work of the Redshirts. Faith produced it. Unfaith destroyed it. And to gauge the completeness of its destruction, look at the war-maps of to-day—and to-morrow.

WALTER ELLIOT

STOCKS, STINTS AND VESTED INTERESTS

IN the dry factual pages of that invaluable publication *Annual Breeding Abstracts* for March, 1943, certain passages appeared in striking juxtaposition. First, regarding the progress of stock breeding in Russia, it read as follows: The number of animal breeding farms in the U.S.S.R. was increased from 347,000 in 1938 to 618,000 on January 1st, 1941. Intensive efforts were being made to increase, by cumulative crossing, the proportion of pure-bred inheritance in cattle. In the Ukraine between 1935 and 1939 the number of pure-bred animals had increased considerably, cattle by 253, pigs by 1,100 and sheep by 788 per cent. (Cynkov and Nabutovsku). By 1942 all breeding males of cattle, sheep and pigs were planned to be pure bred in part and towards this end a network of artificial insemination stations was being established (Smirnichii, etc.). As to horses, the same method of artificial insemination was being intensively developed in order to obtain as quickly as possible the largest number of improved sires of high quality for breeding on the collective farms. As an example, the thoroughbred English horse Bodelerom had by this means sired during 1939 260 mares (Zivotkov, etc.). Artificial insemination before the war was practised to a greater extent in Russia than anywhere in the world. In 1940 no fewer than 447,000 mares, 1,950,000 cows and 15,180,000 ewes were fertilised in this way, and the plan envisaged for 1941 aimed at raising the numbers for that year to 702,000 mares, 2,186,000 cows and 17,900,000 ewes (Neci-parenks). Truly the most hostile critics of the U.S.S.R. cannot deny the prodigious progress which was being made there in livestock breeding, all built upon an intensive selection combined with artificial insemination, which method in the case of sheep has permitted one single male animal to impregnate up to 4,000 ewes in one breeding season.

In contrast, suggesting Falstaff's sack to Falstaff's bread, was a reference from *The Farmer & Stock-Breeder*, revealing an extraordinary condition of things in this country. The following facts have been verified from the original source of the issue of that paper dated January 15th, 1943. The Directors of the Highland Society have approved a recommendation objecting entirely to the introduction of any scheme of artificial insemination for cattle in Scotland. Alone out of all the breed societies conferred with by the Highland Society, the British Friesian Cattle Society was in favour of such a course. As to the reasons which impelled the Highland Society to come to this decision, we may gather what we may from the dictum that "such a system is neither required nor desired in this country." The appropriate interjection here seems "by whom"? Mr. J. E. Kerr, who acted as the mouthpiece in this matter, added that it was feared that if artificial insemination became prevalent, cattle would be very much in-bred and would deteriorate. Such are the only reasons vouchsafed in support of a decision which must fill with disgust every geneticist who desires to see that the new biological knowledge and techniques pioneered in Russia shall be applied to increase food production in the face of the alarming scarcity which must prevail at the end of the war. The only reason adduced, viz., that artificial insemination leads to in-breeding and deterioration is ludicrous in the light of Russian experience and, one may add, in that of the history of those very cattle breeds which, say the breed societies, are menaced with deterioration through in-breeding if artificial insemination became prevalent. It has, in fact, become prevalent in Russia. Has deterioration set in? On the contrary, on every hand the reports are of higher production standards being achieved in every branch of stock-breeding to which it has been applied. But are there not dangers in pressing the thing to the limit? If there are it is strange that the Russians, so vigorous in the practical application of every new accession to knowledge, are pressing on. Far from relaxing their efforts in the direction of in-breeding, the Russians are preparing to intensify them concurrently with the stringent selection based on scientific genetic analysis, which must be a fundamental condition of any sound breeding technique. In this they have the endorsement of everyone qualified to be called a geneticist. One may cite as a representative witness Prof. V. A. Rice (*The Breeding and Improvement of Farm Animals*, 3rd Edn., 1942). Contrary to the suggestion of the Highland Society, Prof. Rice advises, in fact, that just as the livestock concerned is above the average merit of the breed is it advisable to in-breed more closely (p. 512). With a really exceptionally good sire (proved by progeny assessment), son and daughter mating should be carried out and in-breeding progressively pursued in such wise that the third generation would be quadruple great-great-grandsons and daughters of the original sire. Successful examples of such methods are cited for horses and cattle. The works of Sewall Wright, King, and numerous others in the U.S.A. in intensive and prolonged in-breeding experiments with laboratory animals have demonstrated that such methods, in conjunction with skilful selection, far from causing deterioration, can produce far-reaching, sustained improvement.

In regard to the origin of the cattle breeds in this country, it is ironical to quote Prof. Rice: "Close in-breeding," he says, "was practised by the pioneer breeders, Bakewell, the Collings, Bates, Cruikshank, Herwer, etc. The relatively few promising families and the successful nicks between them were the foundation stock of the breeds. Further development may be expected by the intelligent application of the same principles" (*op. cit.* p. 508).

Why, then, we must ask, this remarkable decision of the Highland Society? The answer is the old story of vested interests interposing once again to bolster up an economy of scarcity. It is not the danger to the genes of the livestock but the encroachment on the monopolistically determined profits of a few pedigree herd owners that is the key to the matter. It is plain that when a pure-bred sire is available for a few services only his price must be slashed when by the new biological techniques he is in effect multiplied by ten to twenty times. In this matter it must be emphasised that the interests of the ordinary farmer are not those of the monopolist who is seeking to restrict the utilisation of his breeding animals in order to command scarcity prices. The ordinary farmer stands with the ordinary member of the public. Both alike are injured by a set-up which prevents the livestock of Britain being raised to the highest levels of productivity.

But this is no petty squabble between rival farming interests or even over the prices the public pays for its milk, meat, wool and leather. The whole principle of whether we shall stultify or whether use biological science to meet the fundamental necessity of proper nutrition for all our people is involved. And not only all our people. Over whole continents to-day food shortage casts its menacing shadow. As Dr. John Marrock has recently said before the Fabian Society, Europe will need vast food supplies, approximately 36 million tons in the first year after the war and one-tenth of this food should be milk and meat. So far there is no accumulation of these products, and the deficiency is especially serious in regard to the sources of high-grade protein, mainly available from meat and milk. How to supply it is a flinty question. Upon its answer depends life or death and whether or no misery indescribable, anarchy, revolution, will prevail over a continent. What are we doing to find an answer. The chief evidence so far is the tragico-comical answer of the Highland Society.

In face of these facts, can the British people afford to tolerate what is in effect a policy of sabotage in relation to food production? When a continent stands to starve and our own people to stint if we do not utilise all our resources to the utmost, it is plain that every reason alike of humanity, patriotism and policy cries No. Britain once led the world in the field of cattle breeding. Can we afford to see, as we are seeing, other countries making us look antiquated by comparison to-day? Our application of artificial insemination to cattle breeding is slight compared with what Russia, Germany, the Argentine, Denmark and the U.S.A. are doing. We count in hundreds where the Russians count in thousands. Only two centres for the artificial insemination of livestock exist in the whole country, and their work is confined to small areas. The excellent work under Dr. Hammond and Walton at Cambridge and Bartlett and his colleagues at Reading could with advantage be vastly extended. These men, if we would let them, could revolutionise animal breeding in this country to the immense benefits of every man, woman and child, not only here, but on the starving continent. Who is preventing them? The whole future of livestock production hangs upon the work of our livestock research men. It is for press, public and Parliament to insist on more liberal support to research and that no vested interests prevent it from being applied to produce the food which can and ought to be produced. The vested interests must be broken. The way to do it is to organise, as the Russians have done, a network of livestock breeding stations to cover the whole country, from which every farmer may be enabled to obtain, at a nominal cost, the services of high grade and proven sires. Nothing else is adequate to the situation where the greatness of the need is also the measure of the opportunity. Has Mr. Hudson the pluck to tackle it?

HERBERT BREWER

NO COMPLAINTS

ONE of the most curious phenomena of wartime has been the gradual waning of the traditional English gift for grumbling. The right to grumble has for generations been one of the treasured privileges of democracy. And how magnificently English men and women have taken advantage of it in the last half-century! The sandwiches in railway station refreshment rooms, the meals served in hotels, the income tax, the rates, the wickedness of miners who drank champagne and bought grand pianos, the vileness of playgoers who smoked in theatres, the deterioration of sausages, the decline of Sunday observance, the follies of fashion, the exhaust smells of motor bicycles on the roads, the over-crowdedness of the trains from Liverpool Street, hoardings in rural areas, the behaviour of racegoing crowds, barking dogs and crowing cocks and amateur euphonium-players that kept their neighbours from sleeping, domestic servants who would not wear a cap and apron, blowing whistles for taxis, the hooting of motor horns at midnight, the watering of milk by dairymen, the increasing use of the split infinitive, mixed bathing, the weather, the Government—almost anything in the old days seemed to be a subject that justified a grumble.

But what a change has come over the British race to-day! As a veteran student of grumbling I am an assiduous reader of the letters to the editor in the newspapers, and again and again in

recent months I have gone for a week without coming on a single grumble of the traditional British type. I do not mean to suggest that criticism of the authorities on great public issues has ceased. I am thinking rather of the publicisation of private wrongs in small affairs. At the beginning of the war there were many of these. Thousands of men and women, for example, denounced both the quantity and the quality of the cheese ration. They said that the worker was being starved of his normal quota of cheese, and that at the same time the cheese he obtained was uneatable, causing blisters to appear on the lips and inflammations in the throat. Possessors of refined palates groaned over the disappearance of Stilton and Wensleydale. The fall of France was doubly clouded for them by the thought that for a long time there would be no more Camambert. Yet who now worries about cheese? "How good it is!" one says as, eating it, one reflects that it might easily be worse. It may not be ambrosia, but even wartime cheese must be admitted to have many of the qualities of a food just as, according to a famous Greek professor, water has a surprisingly large number of the qualities of a drink.

Lord Woolton, I am afraid, is more than anyone else responsible for the dwindling of the ancient British habit of grumbling. By various ingenious methods he has wheedled the English public into a mood of complacency about their food. Even West End gourmets have been hypnotised into the conviction that they can lunch on corned beef rissoles with enjoyment. Lord Woolton has persuaded them that carrots are better fare than cantaloupe melons, and—quite justly—that things out of tins are luxuries of which their great-grandfathers never dreamed. He has even not only reconciled them to the wartime sausage, but made many of them enthusiastic about it. Complaints about the sausage were, it must be admitted, bitter during what might be called Eozoic Woolton period. At that time I heard a man in the train saying that there was so much bread in sausages nowadays that you didn't know whether to eat them with mustard or marmalade. Even so recently as a few months ago a London waitress said to me with obviously strong antipathy "I don't care if I never see a sausage again." Yet, since Lord Woolton has introduced Soya beans into the strange amalgam that goes to the making of sausages, I have heard one untired business man after another say: "How good these new sausages are—almost up to the pre-war standard!" Lord Woolton, indeed, has persuaded a whole nation to say, in the spirit of the late M. Coué, that every day and in every way sausages are getting better and better.

It is true that there are still a few minor complaints about food to be heard, such as "Why are no lemons or olive oil coming from the Mediterranean?" But no sooner are they expressed in print than an overwhelming answer appears that puts an end to grumbling. Dried eggs again, say some, cause jaundice, but others with greater authority prove that dried eggs do not cause jaundice. Even bread, about which so many and so well-justified complaints were made towards the end of the last war, scarcely gives rise to a ripple of complaint to-day on the ocean of public opinion. As for margarine, we have almost got to like it. Is it that Lord Woolton, with a genius for mass hypnotism, has brought about the atrophy of our palates—palates that may now never return to their former refinement?

Clothes, on the other hand, unlike food, continue to be the subject of some minor grumblings. There is a vocal minority which keeps up the cry "More clothes for fewer coupons." There is also a strong feeling among tailors that there is something wrong with a world in which men are asked to wear trousers without turn-ups. But, as all the best-dressed men at the Bar and other locations wear trousers without turn-ups, the complaint rings hollow. And, after all, if any man wants to roll up his trousers at the ankles, he can always do so, however short the trousers are. Even about high taxation and the prices of things the amount of grumbling is extraordinarily small. Income tax and surtax, which at the present level would once have plunged a great part of England into inspissated gloom, are now accepted as the essentials of a cloud with an increasingly silver lining. Drink and tobacco have increased in price to an extent that threatens the finer spirits among their devotees with bankruptcy, but I have not noticed any declension of cheerfulness on the faces of the frequenters of taverns. Occasionally an old-age pensioner, as he fills his pipe with twist, says: "I can remember the time when this baccy cost threepence an ounce; now it costs me one and tenpence." But he says it with a smile of resignation, as though he recognised that fate must have its fun. He tells of a time when the beer that costs him tenpence a pint to-day cost twopence; but he makes no grievance of it, and a minute later forgets economics to discuss philology—why mild beer is called "wallop" and when this curious name was first applied to it. None of the septuagenarians knows the answer to this. One of them says: "There used to be an older name for beer in my young days—'legs and wings.' I remember when Mrs. Brockett (the landlady) came here first. I came in and asked for a pint of legs-and-wings. 'What's that?' she says. 'Beer,' I says. 'Why is it called that?' she says. 'I suppose,' I says, 'because there's no body in it.'" It is a name, I imagine, that must have come from a Victorian music-hall; but the cheerful memory of it was enough to banish any sense of grievance over the present price of wallop.

Whether the spread of good-humoured complacency at the present rate is or is not a national menace, remains, as the saying is, to be seen. Psychologists may see in it a danger-signal, for, after all, is not good humour to a considerable extent the result of repressions? To have reasons for grumbling and yet not to grumble may be to close a safety-valve. There are few natural Mark Tapleys who grumble only because there is nothing worth grumbling about. Most of us keep our tempers, when we do keep them, largely because we have been trained to do so; and this training has been frowned on by some modern authorities on human behaviour. I read a book the other day in which husbands who feel cross with their wives are advised to behave naturally and to clear the air with a family quarrel. Depressed husbands, it was said, feel much better after a quarrel: the effect on the wives was, it was admitted, less certain. They, however, may become viragoes in their turn, and this—who knows?—may be one way of creating the ideal home.

That grumbling is a mark of health has been held by others besides psychologists. There is a well-known story of a colonel who on one occasion during the last war said of his regiment in France:

> "I don't like the look of things at all. The men all seem so contented. So long as they grumble, I know everything's all right. It means that they're getting all their troubles off their chest in the normal way. But now they're all so cheerful. I can't make head or tail of it. It seems to me ominous."

The Gilbertian song complained merely of the flatness of life without grumbling. In the colonel, however, the absence of grumbling inspired dread, as something portending mutiny.

In the early part of the war there were a number of people who, realising the importance of "getting it off your chest," organised Grumbling Clubs in various parts of the country. It was said that the meetings they held usually ended with "shouts of happiness." Having relieved their feelings with a thunderstorm of grumbling, the grumblers found the clouds miraculously dispersed and the sun shining from a blue sky. They were cured on the same principle as children who hated their fathers were cured in a modern nursery school. A potential young patricide at this school was taken into a room with an Aunt Sally propped against the wall, told to imagine that the Aunt Sally was his father, and given a basket of hard balls to hurl at the head and body of the symbolic figure. One was told that, by the time the child's arm was aching as a result of its murderous efforts, it was softened into a mood in which it recognised that its father was not such a pest as it had previously thought him. It was no longer a victim of repressed desires: life, with a father battered into insensibility, as it were, had become radiant.

I do not, of course, wish to suggest that human beings should go out of their way to loose disagreeable emotions. After all, good humour has always been the weft of the English character, and grumbling and complaining merely the warp. The question that puzzles me, however, is whether just at present there is quite enough warp. Can men and women find no longer any cause for complaint in the little things of life and so keep the atmosphere free from complacency? Surely matches are still scarce enough to justify a short letter of protest to a newspaper. The cost of stamps for postcards, too, seems to me pretty scandalous. Then there are the bus queues and the shortage of soda water. Any one could make a long list of things worth complaining about at a Grumblers' Club, if such a club still exists. I should not like to think that the spirit of grumbling is permanently dead in England. According to the popular song, "There'll always be an England," but how different an England it will be if it becomes a nation that has ceased to know how and when to grumble!

Y.Y.

DRAMA

Mr. Norman Marshall's Company was founded at the end of last year by the Cambridge Arts Theatre Trust in conjunction with C.E.M.A. It is a repertory company which gives its first performances at Cambridge (its home) and often visits other towns. Beside *Uncle Vanya*, that repertory includes *The Wild Duck*, Pinero's *The Gay Lord Quex*, Schnitzler's *Liebelei*, *The Critic*, an adaptation of *The Idiot* by Mr. Ronald Barker, and *A Soldier for Friday* by Reginald Beckwith. (Let me remind you that Mr. Norman Marshall directed the Gate Theatre for about five years until it was bombed.) The Cambridge Arts Theatre was opened in 1936. It is worth while giving a brief account of it, because were there more places of entertainment managed on the same lines (there are a few) the pleasure taken by the people of England in the arts would be keener and more intelligent. Being a more or less self-educated man, in the sense that no one who deliberately tried to teach me anything succeeded, it may be that I underestimate what schoolmasters can achieve: I have little faith in schedules, and so forth. But what I do, and most vehemently, believe in, is having great lumps of culture lying about everywhere for mice to come and nibble at.

The Cambridge Arts Theatre, when it opened, announced that its object was the entertainment of the University and the Town.

> Its name describes, and the form of a pentagon given to its auditorium by the architect symbolises, its purpose of providing a home in Cambridge for the five arts of drama, opera, ballet, music and cinema.

And, sure enough, there followed Sadler's Wells ballets and operas, symphony concerts, pianoforte recitals, Film Society programmes, famous plays ancient and modern (from time to time with leading actors and actresses), revues, a pantomime or two. But the difficulty lay in keeping the drama up to a decent standard. So few West End plays stand transplantation. Lavishly performed for audiences chiefly composed of those who having the theatre-habit have become content with the pleasure of seeing some favourite player, and of those for whom merely to sit in any London theatre is itself a treat, such plays may be good enough. But deprived of their lavish settings, their indulgent audience and their stars they won't do in the provinces. The Trustees of the Cambridge Theatre therefore started a small resident repertory company with a good producer to extend the range of its drama and so include more good plays. By means of visits from other repertory companies (the Old Vic's and the Pilgrim Players') and, thanks to Arts Theatre's other entertainments, its concerts, ballets, films, operas, time could be found for re-

hearsing the dramatic programmes properly; while the Cambridge resident company could enjoy, in such intervals, the stimulus of playing before fresh audiences elsewhere. This is an excellent arrangement and should be copied wherever repertory theatres exist. Mr. Norman Marshall's company is now visiting the Westminster Theatre and acting *Uncle Vanya*.

This is a play with which I am familiar. Faults in any interpretation of it therefore leap to my eyes at once, while to the general effect, I tend to be, perhaps, less sensitive than I was. I take that for granted now, which is hardly fair to interpreters, since its creation must be the result of happy strokes of acting and happy combinations. I have no doubt that the spirit of Chekov's play comes across at the Westminster Theatre, and that receptive members of the audience feel at the end what Chekov intended they should; more sympathy than contempt for his chief characters. Living and lovable to me was Mr. Harold Scott's Vanya, with his harassed intense little eyes, his undignified despair, and alternately mournful and excitable gestures. But vivid also to me, alas, are the points at which some of the other characters failed to actualise themselves before me. I did not recognise Dr. Astrov in Mr. Frith Banbury, nor Yelena in the stiffly severe, not to say formidable, Miss Swinstead. Mr. Banbury's make-up and demeanour were hard to reconcile with the impression he has to make on the women in the play, to whom he seems an interesting and superior man. Astrov has for them that charm which a handsome dilapidated idealist often exercises. While clinging eloquently to the larger hope, he revels in confessing his disappointment with himself. How near to them those self-reproaches seem to bring his intrinsic fineness, and when combined with obvious human weaknesses (say one for vodka) how real they make a woman's hope of helping him through love! That is how gentle patient Sonia felt about Astrov. The lovely, disappointed, listless, self-absorbed Yelena, towards whom he turned his more cynical side, knowing it would impress, also almost succumbed. Indeed, if even the line of inclination had not required a small decision, he would have won her—for a while. Astrov was a hard-worked country doctor, not, it is true, good at his job. but full of sympathy for the poor peasants, for whom he could do so little. He never neglected his work till charmed by the baleful, beautiful Yelena. His ideal of a happy future civilisation seems, like that of William Morris, to have been coloured by a conception of happier periods in the past: forests and homesteads—the life of the earth. I stress this because English interpreters of Russian characters tend to regard them as rotters merely because they talk about their irresolution and despondency and are full of self-pity; because, in short, they are frank about what Englishmen try to conceal. But this frankness is, really a saving grace—granted their futility. Shaw, at any rate, thought so in *Heartbreak House*. You remember Captain Shotover's remark, "Here, you need not be a watchdog barking to keep out truth."

Miss Vivienne Bennett's Sonia had admirable passages; and she was most touching in the delivery of that dim little closing speech about the life to come, with which she tries to brace up herself and the broken-hearted Vanya to face the long dull years before them. But on the first night she was naughty in one respect. (Perhaps she has been since reproved.) She made herself up to look most attractive. This was quite easy for her to do, yet clean contrary to the part. So that when she was thinking of Astrov's indifference, and sadly recalling how she had overheard people saying "What a pity she's so plain!" the pathos missed its mark. And let alone her shell-pink complexion and darkened eye-brows and eye-lashes, Sonia was also far too brilliantly dressed. Think a moment: her uncle had only been getting 500 roubles, about £50 a year, out of the decayed estate, after it had been milked to support the celebrated critic and his wife in dignity. What then would Sonia's dress allowance have been? Yet there she was in feathers as fine as Yelena's own and looking prettier than her, when she ought to have been an inconspicuous sparrow beside a bird of paradise. Mr. Edwards as the famous critic acted admirably. There was an efficient man for you! True, he is past his prime and now occupied entirely with his health. But what dominating power he still exudes! Think of the row of books to his name on the deepest aspects of art! Of course their contents were valueless but there is nothing "inefficient" in such a career as that. The scenery was charming and appropriate, (by the way how much more aesthetically pleasing it is to paint pictures in their frames upon a background than to hang up real ones) but the drawing room scene suggested too much grandeur. To my thinking in the late-night scene between Sonia and Yelana when the latter draws from the girl a confession of her love, the lighting should have been more dim. I have seen a better production of *Uncle Vanya* but this one also will charm, touch and amuse those who go to see it.

DESMOND MACCARTHY

THE MOVIES

"Victory Through Air Power," at the New Gallery

"Heaven Can Wait," at the Gaumont

The latest full-length film by Walt Disney, *Victory Through Air Power*, has no Mickeys, Goofys, Donalds, not even Robert Benchley, to soften the edge of propaganda. Its aim is to implant in audiences, and particularly American audiences, the importance of the aeroplane in modern warfare. The historical sketch with which the film opens has some old Disney touches: Wilbur Wright running alongside his famous box plane and clutching at his bowler is charming during the few seconds of his appearance. The aerial duels of the last war begin with fantasy, but as the air forces on both sides grows, grimness supervenes. The air monsters no longer leap and gasp and flutter; with more destructive mechanism and streamlined bodies Disney turns to realism: the sort of realism that made the reptile age in *Fantasia* so impressive. The panorama of the present war, in vivid poster style, is brilliantly achieved, with animated maps (always in colour, of course), cartoon flashes of everything from V formations spearing the clouds to sharklike U-boats lurking on the sea floor in wait for convoys, commentary passing from one voice to another and linking the story together. The history of the present, as told by Major Seversky (on whose book *Victory Through Air Power* the film is based) is dramatic, lurid, biased and two-thirds true. He emphasises the importance of supply lines and long-distance bombing on a huge scale. His view of the future is distinctly Wellsian. Ten-ton bombs, rocket steel-piercing bombs, bombs that explode into thousands of incendiaries, and huge combat airplanes, with a 3,000-mile range, to carry them are among the Things to Come. The years flash up on the screen . . . 1944, '45, '46 . . . how many more years before the end? Major Seversky stops, tentatively, at 1948, with Tokyo blasted by airplanes from Alaska and Japan finally crushed. One needn't accept all of Major Seversky's facts and prophecies to be gripped by this brilliant and depressing film.

Style is a very rare quality in films. Some of Lubitsch's films have had it, some not; being immensely accomplished, he has shown himself airy or vulgar as fashion demanded. *Heaven Can Wait* is a return to the better, individual Lubitsch: not quite his best, perhaps, but near it. An elderly mild Casanova descends the carpeted steps to the reception room of Hell; the devil, frock-coated and suavely helpful, rises from his desk to meet him. Easy death? No hard feelings? What can we do for you? Your credentials, though, will need looking into! So our mild Casanova (Don Ameche) gets going, and his story—the adventures with women which should ensure his entrance into Hell—is unrolled. It begins with a beetle given to a small girl in the park, and ends with a night-nurse whose looks prove too strong for an ailing man. In between there are governesses and ladies of revue who walk down steps, a happy marriage, and the ironic reminiscent voice of Casanova remembering his past. Heaven, by the way, or a heavenly annexe for doubtful residents, in the end claims this good-natured lover whose sins aren't quite black enough. Charles Coburn is delicious (but disappears too quickly) as a grandpa. This sort of thing began with Guitry, and though Lubitsch and Don Ameche don't add up to Guitry, *Heaven Can Wait* has unusual wit and charm. It has Technicolor, too, wisely and not too gloriously used.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Le Lac des Cygnes," at the New Theatre

The Sadler's Wells Company deserves all praise for the resolution with which it has maintained classical ballet in its repertory by the side of less exacting and more easily appreciated modern works. For the classical technique remains far the best foundation for dancing. Inevitably an evening devoted to *Lac des Cygnes* makes apparent the limitations of the company's resources. Such ballets are designed to display virtuoso performers and the scenic magnificences of a great opera-house. Nor is the music of the sort that lends itself readily to the powers of a small orchestra. The company makes a most gallant attempt to overcome these difficulties, and whenever Miss Margot Fonteyn is visible, the spectator has no need to make allowances. She has great personal elegance as well as a fine technique. Mr. Helpmann carries off brilliantly a peculiarly ungraceful part, and M. Rassine astonishes by the elevation of his leaps. The new decor by Mr. Leslie Hurry is painfully, though doubtless intentionally, unintegrated. The costumes, though some are excellent, are in keeping neither with each other nor with the scenery. The lake looks more likely to produce a sewer-rat than a swan, and the palace is a hotch-potch of styles varying from the Perpendicular to the Frascati and the Freudian. It is hard now to produce an appropriately romantic setting, but this decor has no perceptible relation to the entrancing world of Tchaikovsky and Petipa.

French Music at the Wigmore Hall

If the French Committee for National Liberation orders all its affairs as beautifully as the Wigmore Hall concerts it occasionally promotes, then the outlook for Europe becomes brighter. Last Monday a new series began with an evening of Fauré, in which everything had been perfectly planned: music, artists, provision of a well-printed booklet containing all the Verlaine poems whose settings by Fauré and Debussy are to be heard during the cycle. Miss Kathleen Long bore the weight of the programme and also accompanied Miss Sophie Wyss in a most musical performance of the song cycle, *La Bonne Chanson*. The remaining concerts should not be missed: on September 13th a Debussy programme with Maggie Teyte; and September 20th Fauré and Debussy with Sophie Wyss again and performances of the rarely heard 'cello sonatas by both masters.

"Flying Colours," at the Lyric

After the jaunty wartime beginning *Flying Colours* forgets its title and turns out pretty well. There is Mr. Douglas Byng, past master (or mistress) in the art of feminine hauteur, and his Roman Lady interlards scandal and Latin tags magnificently. Then there is Mr. Jackie Hunter who surprises and captures a very mixed audience with a cautionary tale of Belloc's beautifully set. And lastly there is Miss Binnie Hale, at her liveliest in parody of others. These are the highlights, and the usual sketches, ballets, sentimental tableaux are up to standard. "Don't Let's be Beastly to the Germans" was down in the programme as No. 14, but for some reason Mr. Byng didn't oblige.

Correspondence

KING PETER'S GOVERNMENT

SIR,—According to present plans, King Peter of Yugoslavia and his Government of officials will shortly be transferring their activities to Cairo. The *N.S. & N.*, in common with some other weeklies, has done its best to bring home to the British public the significance of this new development, both as regards the reaction within Jugoslavia itself and the consequences for British prestige in the Balkans.

Here is an example of the way in which the new Government has helped on anti-British propaganda in Croatia. Speaking over the *Radio Zagreb* on August 12th last, Matja Kovachich, Director-General of Propaganda under Pavelich, declared: "It is clear that the idea of a Yugoslavia has lost much of its value even in English eyes. It has not been declared dead, as yet, simply because that would mean the loss of British power in south-eastern Europe. . . . Eve

those who wanted the resurrection of Yugoslavia for their own interests have to admit that their hopes were in vain. . . . The great comedy has developed as was to be logically expected." Allowing for propaganda exaggeration, it is still true that that is how the recent appointments are regarded within Yugoslavia.

There are undoubtedly many good reasons for being exasperated with the "older politicians" who failed for so long to agree, and who even to-day prefer to continue to harangue each other rather than reach understanding at the very moment when the future existence of their country is at stake. Their negative protests mean little at a time when positive action is called for. The "older politicians" placed party and personal issues before the claims of State, and have found their intrigues recoil on their own heads. But surely the alternative to them was not a Government of nonentities, appointed in a most dictatorial manner, and in a country where democracy is so highly extolled in every public speech! There were younger men, among the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, here, in the United States, and in Cairo, who might well have been invited to show what their generation could do for the new Yugoslavia. But they were not asked.

The Puritch Government represents nobody, is even fed up with itself and many of its members would like nothing better than to retire into the anonymity whence they came. Yet if you talk with them they leave you with the impression that they are in office at the behest of the British Government, since none of them believe that King Peter would have taken such a step without the backing of powerful British official circles.

There is an even more serious side to this affair. Presumably Mr. Eden is endeavouring to reach an understanding with Mr. Maisky on those European problems which still divide Britain from Russia. Some of these concern the Balkans, including the future of certain aspects of Yugoslav policy. And it is difficult, as one of the keenest observers of European political trends stated recently to the present writer, to see how the Anglo-Soviet Treaty can hope to last for 20 years, if Britain intends to lend its support to such puppet Governments as Puritch's!

If this new Government goes to Cairo there should be no illusions as to the consequences. It will be a marked triumph for General Zhivkovich and the dictatorship which ruled Yugoslavia under Prince Paul and Stoyadinovich, especially as it will have here in London a trusted ally in M. Yevtich, whom it is intended to make Yugoslav Ambassador to the Court of St. James.

Britain is missing an opportunity which may not recur for a long time. King Peter and the more democratic of his representatives here and elsewhere outside Yugoslavia could now be helped to establish a Government which would enjoy real confidence both within and without the country. If it were to become the mouthpiece not simply of Mihailovich, but also of Partisan guerrillas as well as of democratic elements, such a Government might return at the end of hostilities as the healer rather than as the perpetuator of quarrels which bode ill not only for their own country but also for the peace of Europe.

British ignorance of central and south-eastern Europe has cost us dearly in the past. May we not have to pay the same price again!

J. A. JONES

STATE MEDICAL SERVICE

SIR,—It is a pity that Mr. Somerville Hastings should dismiss the British Medical Association's general statements about the medical importance of social and environmental conditions as sentiments with which everyone will agree. It is, as it happens, a fact of medical knowledge that the health of the people of this country would be far better improved by proper agricultural, housing and educational policies than by any kind of medical service however comprehensive. This is a fact that wants as much emphasis as possible not only because everyone is going to be disappointed with the results produced by a national medical service if it is forgotten, but also because most doctors and politicians are so ignorant of physiology that they don't understand that it is a fact and so treat it as a sentiment the country can't afford.

It is always a pity when good Socialists go wrong, so I should also like to comment on the over-simplification of what Mr. Somerville Hastings calls the most dangerous proposal of all, the recommendation that everyone should be free, if he so chooses, to consult some other doctor than the doctor he has already chosen to be his official doctor. The B.M.A.'s language is here, as in most of its recommendations, pretty inept, and it is not made clear that the B.M.A. is here concerned with an existing personal freedom which it wants perpetuating because patients make such use of it. For example, a woman will see a woman doctor about some specially "intimate" matters when she would see her proper family doctor about everything else. Again, in a national medical service a person's medical record card will accompany him unescapably throughout his life. Is there to be the freedom to prevent any particular illness, say V.D., from appearing on the record card by consulting a doctor privately? This is only partly a medical problem, and if it is desirable that such freedom should exist, it should be available, in the words of the B.M.A. recommendation, to every member of the community. If you accept the principle of freedom of choice of doctor by patient (and in spite of so much left-wing lukewarmness on this point, I have yet to meet the doctor who did not consider the choice of doctor for his family far more carefully than the average patient does), then you have got to allow private consultation within the official scheme. The method of payment for such work needs careful consideration but obviously need not involve the dangers Mr. Somerville Hastings fears. Why not take the B.M.A. at its word, and demand that if such a freedom is good for those people who, as things are at present, can afford to pay for it, it should be one of the benefits of a national medical service?

R. H. MOLE

11 Walton Crescent,
Oxford.

THIS STICK BUSINESS

SIR,—"A Woman Magistrate" in "This Stick Business" lays about her with vigour, but somewhat unnecessarily, and in a biased way.

As a magistrate her knowledge of the Children and Young Persons Act of 1933, and the rules relating to it, is shockingly inaccurate and incomplete. The Act is infused with idealism. But though possessed of an excellent Act magistrates without the welfare of juvenile delinquents at heart can fail the children brought before them. For example, "A Woman Magistrate" failed in her duty if she did not press for a remand or adjournment for inquiries by the probation officer, or the local officer of the N.S.P.C.C., in the case she quotes of a boy being thrashed four times a week by his stepfather, if that case came before her Court.

A tiny minority of back-woods Courts use birching, but birching can only be administered between 8 and 14 years of age.

She should press for a better Court arrangement if "Dad and Ma" have both to attend her Court, for only one parent is required. And she should do something to prevent "anxious hours of waiting."

Nor are so many children bold enough to speak much in the strange surroundings of a Juvenile Court, and it is perhaps the acid test of good magistrates (only three should sit at a time, one of them a woman) if they can get a boy or girl to come up to them and talk. If her Court cannot achieve this there is much wrong with it. If the home inquiries carried out by the probation officer (made to assist the magistrates in knowledge about the delinquent and how best to help the boy or girl), are not carried out with kindness, courtesy, good sense and tact, then her Case Committee could and should deal with that probation officer.

Probation is not just a matter of reporting to the probation officer, but at times an affair of really strenuous co-operation between probation officer, and the delinquent, and his parents, to shape him into

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KEGAN PAUL

September 20

MOTHER RUSSIA

"Mr. Maurice Hindus" wrote a reviewer in the *Spectator* when *Russia Fights On* was published, "is probably the best living interpreter of Soviet Russia to the Anglo-Saxon world. He is singularly just in his judgment."

This new book describes Soviet Russia at war. *12/6*

MAURICE HINDUS

COLLINS

SEPTEMBER 13

Douglas Reed

LEST WE REGRET

With this book Douglas Reed concludes the task he set himself, seven years ago, when he began to write *Insanity Fair*. That book, he says, was 'an urgent warning of the imminent outbreak of war and of the way to avert it.' This is 'an urgent warning of the imminent outbreak of peace, and of the way to preserve it.'

Other books by Douglas Reed are *Disgrace Abounding*, *A Prophet at Home*, *All Our Tomorrows* and *Downfall*.

[12s 6d net]

JONATHAN CAPE

the finest type of citizen within his capabilities.

Mothers and fathers are not all "too fully occupied in winning the war." Many are too fully occupied now, as they were before the war, in having a pleasant life at the cost of neglecting their children's mental, moral and physical upbringing.

"A Woman Magistrate" has written a most prejudiced article, and in the compass of a short letter all her errors and omissions cannot be pointed out. Some are touched on above.

A COURT OFFICIAL

COMMON LAW PARLIAMENT

SIR,—My attention has been directed to a criticism of the People's Common Law Parliament in a recent issue of the NEW STATESMAN.

As my name appears on certain literature published by this organisation, I have to state that I am no longer a member of its Governing Council nor an officer of its Medical Guild, and any further use of my name is entirely without my authority or consent.

CHARLES BROOK

ACTOR AND CRITIC

SIR,—Mr. Michael Redgrave says that "the artists, either out of timidity or pride, never give fight." Don't they? All that he has to say rings in my ears like D'Artagnan's battle-cry: "*A moi!*"

I agree with him that our fight should not be against the critics. They should, of course, be on our side, armed to the teeth in the *real* battle that has got to be fought if a healthy theatre is to survive and mature. But there can be no harm in explaining to them the nature of the battle they are expected to fight and the type of weapons best suited to the struggle. Mr. Redgrave has suggested an agenda for the Critic's Circle and (indirectly) a refresher course of reading matter. To this I would add a suggestion to reread (or, in some cases, just *read*) the dramatic classics and ponder on the relation of these works to the period in which they were written. It might, for instance, be interesting to a conscientious student of the drama to learn that when Chehov wrote *Uncle Vanya* Lenin was serving his first term of exile for revolutionary activity. Facts of this kind give a charming perspective to all Chehov's work and explain why our Allies find their honoured dramatist so full-bloodedly humorous and we, so often, find him melancholy.

It is even quite amusing to ask oneself if the first State campaign in this country against V.D. was organised when Ibsen wrote *Ghosts* in 1880 (in Berchtesgaden!) or in 1942?

Surely the greatest need of a critic, as of an actor, is a sense of social responsibility, an eye for history and a heart for humanity.

The public knows little of the conditions under which artists work. It might be worth some critic's while, as well as part of his job, to explain to the public that there will never be a high standard of theatrical production in this country unless rehearsal periods can be guaranteed many more weeks of intensive preparation. Unless creative artists can be released from the talent-breaking prison of "long runs." Unless a method and course of training is made obligatory for those wishing to enter the ranks of the acting, producing and allied professions. That most theatre buildings, and all that is in them, are completely out of date. That rentals and, consequently, seating are extortionate. That entertainment and the use of leisure can be made stimulating as well as relaxing. That only a minority of British people visit the theatre regularly.

Shouldn't a critic know something of cause before judging effect? They seem to me to be weary, disappointed people. Perhaps they feel lonely, isolated? They should make common cause with artists. They should be our generals in the fight and cease to try to build up comic journalistic personalities and dusty egos. They may have to risk a little to gain a lot but, when all is said and done, they won't have to stand up in public as actors do. If they and us and then the public were to make common cause for common aims the opposition (which is only a handful) would melt away like dew on a sunny morning. And then what a theatre we should have!

BEATRIX LEHMANN

THE CASE OF THE HOMOSEXUAL

SIR,—While agreeing with Dr. Reid that a more humane attitude towards homosexuals is long overdue in this country, let us have also a constructive approach to homosexuality and not the defeatist one which he himself puts forward by quoting Dr. Kenneth Hall. Any doctor who sits down under defeat and propounds the impossibility of progress in any sphere does not deserve the name of doctor. We might as well decide to abandon the search for the long-looked-for cancer cure.

By what authority does Dr. Hall—one expert among many—assert publicly that cure of homosexuality is impossible? And which experts have decided that all homosexuals belong to "a congenital variation of the human species"? Presumably *not* the psychiatrists who have effected permanent cures when the trouble has arisen from "post-natal mental disturbance" or other psychological causes!

It is true that many homosexuals are not interested in cures or are not prepared to make the sacrifices that treatment naturally involves. But for the sake of those who *are* interested, why not make it more widely known that cure is possible in some cases if the patient wants to be cured? Dr. Ernest Jones, who is undoubtedly the greatest expert over here, on the psychological side, has said that the right kind of psycho-analysis (for this work) are able to obtain a large proportion of cures. Other eminent psychiatrists bear him out, though they make no foolish promises about miracle cures overnight. Success depends a good deal on the invert's desire to be cured. . . . I have heard homosexuals complain that one seldom *hears* of cures. And because fear is so often uppermost in his psychology the homosexual may even fear to make inquiries. This is very understandable with the law as it is. But perhaps when the law is altered some of those who have been cured will be prepared to speak about it.

It is significant—to quote from Kenneth Walker's *Physiology of Sex*—"that in France during the old Monarchy when a homosexual, as the law then stood, was liable to be burnt at the stake, inversion was both fashionable and conspicuous, whereas in modern France, under the Napoleonic code, homosexuality is looked down upon and very little in evidence. The mere fact that there are harsh laws against an activity may lead to a glorification of it." IRENE STILES

ART GALLERIES

SIR,—Art-loving Londoners are familiar with the fact that most private art galleries close at 1 o'clock on Saturdays. That may leave sufficient time for some people to visit the galleries, but it means that art-loving war workers like myself have no chance whatsoever to visit an exhibition all the year round—except for their holiday-week—since they usually work until 6 p.m. and until 12.30 p.m. on Saturdays.

I don't see why we should be barred so completely from a form of cultural enjoyment which means to many of us infinitely more than the picture-theatres and the dance hall.

May I put forward a suggestion which would help us and would earn the gallery-owners our sincere thanks?

Most exhibitions have a run of 3–4 weeks. Wouldn't it be possible for the galleries to single out one Saturday afternoon during the run of each exhibition, when closing-times would be fixed, let us say, for 3 or 4 p.m., and the date given in the Press through the advertising column?

Then we war workers would have our chance, and the sacrifice on the side of the gallery would be relatively small, and it would earn them a good deal of popularity!

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

VIRGINIA WOOLF has made it impossible for anyone coming after her to review Horace Walpole's letters, with her perfect essay on the impossibility of doing justice to the new Yale edition of them. So much work has gone into it, such mountainous collections of correspondence, photostats of everything extant in Horace Walpole's hand, a great deal of the library he had around him at Strawberry Hill, the books he printed at his press in the garden there, the Gothic lantern that shed its dim medieval light upon the staircase—so complete is the work that it is with a sense of triumph that one comes across the slightest, most unimportant error, such as the attribution of Mount Edgcumbe to Devon instead of to Cornwall. No doubt a trifle like the Tamar estuary is invisible from the fastnesses of Farmington, Conn., where Mr. Lewis's stupifying collection of Walpoliana reposes. An error, or the omission of a note to tell us which Duke is being referred to (as in Vol. II, p. 261), comes as a shock, though a pleasant shock, like an unexpected, tricky catch of a ball in the cricket field.

The Yale edition has now got as far as the Correspondence with Montagu,* the best of all Horace Walpole's series of letters, taken all round. It contains some of his most famous letters, like those describing the trial of the Jacobite lords after the '45, the funeral of George II and the coronation banquet of George III, the wonderful description of Walpole's visit after many years to his father's great house at Houghton with all its memories, the celebrated party at Vauxhall, that on the glorious summer of 1759 with its victories and golden weather ("Our bells are worn threadbare with ringing for victories"). But apart even from all these, which have become almost set-pieces with frequent quotation, Walpole is at his best, his gayest and most spontaneous, in writing to Montagu. They were friends from their school-days at Eton; they both belonged to the innermost circle of the great Whig families; they knew everybody. While Walpole lived the busiest and most active social life in London, or constantly entertained at Strawberry Hill, Montagu lazed his time away in the country and was content to hear what happened in the world from the most brilliant and vivacious letters anybody ever got. He was so indolent, and often unresponsive, that he didn't deserve to have them. But the indolent and impassive frequently have an unaccountable attraction for the active-minded and sprightly; and so it was with Walpole and George Montagu.

To all the gaieties and charms of a Walpole correspondence there is added the psychological interest in this case of the curious relation between these two. From the very beginning it is Walpole who makes the pace, the more interesting man making up to the less: "Write soon," he says, "for I love your letters." How often he had to repeat the request in the years that were to come, until even his vivacity flagged against such massive unresponsiveness and he was driven to complain. "I hate you for being so indifferent about me," Walpole writes; "I live in the world, and yet love nothing, care a straw for nothing, but two or three old friends that I have loved these thirty years." And again, just before Montagu allowed their friendship to lapse into silence: "But I grow old; and the less time we have to live together, the more I feel a separation from a person I love so well."

Montagu was a lazy bachelor, a sort of FitzGerald, who dreamed his life away in the country, drinking his port, nursing the gout, dozing by the fire in his successive country houses. Not that he had FitzGerald's gifts; but all the same he was not without talent. He was a very good letterwriter, when he chose to exert himself—as we can now see from this first publication of his letters in full; he was well read, interested like Walpole in antiquarian things, amusing; he must have had charm. The real passion of his life, as with a good many bachelors who do nothing about it, was for his family, the great Montagu clan, the Cues as they are called all through their correspondence; anything about the doings of any of them was grateful news to him sunk in rustic sloth at Greatworth or Adderbury; any family portrait he could pick up, or Walpole for him, was grist to his mill and went into his collection. He, too, was something of a collector, in this a follower of Walpole's; and they both shared a romantic sensibility to Nature. He was as proud in his quieter way, of his own Greatworth as Horace was of Strawberry Hill. "My Greatworth begins to put on its pretty looks," he writes in April 1763, "and I amuse myself with washing its face and powdering its hair, and I hope for a country lass you will not find her quite inelegant." One misses the lyrical note of Walpole's love for Strawberry, "where [May 1761] my two passions, lilacs and nightingales, are in full bloom. I spent Sunday as if it was Apollo's birthday, Gray and Mason were with me, and we listened to the nightingales till one o'clock in the morning." Or the sharpness of a poet in his observation: "observing [May 1763] all the way I came the proof of the duration of this east wind, for on the west side the blossoms were so covered with dust one could not distinguish them; on the eastern hand the hedges were white in all the pride of May."

With such a friend, the nervous, highly strung, electric Walpole could be perfectly at ease. He wrote Montagu all the gossip of the town, all the events and happenings, the great occasions of public life as well as the tittle-tattle of private life. But we must never forget that the small-talk, the amusements, amenities, extravagances were those of a society that was intensely political at heart, of an aristocracy that ruled England and made an Empire. It is that that gives a solid foundation of rock to all the bubble and effervescence on the surface, that makes all the difference between Horace Walpole's "town" and Proust's Faubourg. Walpole himself was an active politician who worked and intrigued hard for his side—Macaulay forgot this, among other things, when he treated him as a mere *farceur*, and the Victorians followed suit. Almost the deepest thing in Horace was his pride in his father, the great man who ruled England as Prime Minister longer than anyone else and who ended his career under a cloud. His son found it hard to forgive anyone who had contributed, however many years ago, to his father's fall. And so we have the unforgettable portraits of Newcastle for ever behaving absurdly on the public stage, making a fool of himself at George II's funeral:

> He fell into a fit of crying the moment he came into the chapel and flung himself back in a stall, the Archbishop hovering over him with a smelling bottle—but in two minutes his curiosity got the better of his hypocrisy and he ran about the chapel with his glass to spy who was or was not there, spying with one hand and mopping his eyes with t'other. Then returned the fear of catching cold, and the Duke of Cumberland, who was sinking with heat, felt himself weighed down, and turning round, found it was the Duke of Newcastle standing upon his train to avoid the chill of the marble.

The Duke was an Aunt Sally for everybody, but even his Duchess comes in for a *coup de patte* from Walpole.

> On Tuesday the operation of shaving was happily performed on the upper lip of her Grace the Duchess of Newcastle by a celebrated artist from Paris sent over on purpose by the Earl of Albemarle.

The two old bachelors talked antiquities, books, projects for planting, building, printing, improving; and, as bachelors will, they talked bawdy. "Dick Edgcumbe is shut up with the itch; the ungenerous would ascribe it to Mrs. Day, but he denies it, owning, however, that he is very well contented to have it, as nobody will venture on her." Lord Calthorpe has gone mad and walks down Whitehall with red ribbons in his hair to insist on seeing the King. Lady Townshend falls madly in love with the Jacobite Lord Kilmarnock at his trial. We are kept well posted in news of the health of Mr. Chute of the Vine: he is always in or out of bed with the gout, and nothing else happens to him at all, except an occasional chaste visit to Strawberry Hill. "Here I am with the poor Chutehed, who has put on a shoe but to-day for the first time." "The poor Chute rose from the gout, and Lady Carberry who can raise nothing" are now at Frogmore. Mr. Chute has another very severe fit of the gout; and now again he is out of his bed—one feels it is but for a very short while.

How much we have to be grateful for to this friendship which has left us such a portrait, with all its colours, its lights and shades, of that age and world! One still derives some sense of it from the gaping windows and broken fanlights of those streets in and around Arlington Street. "From my earliest memory, Arlington Street has been the ministerial street." But how much more one gets it from these letters! Two days before her death Lady Hervey wrote to her son: "I feel my dissolution coming on—but I have no pain—what can an old woman desire more?" The brave, stoical, *sensible* eighteenth century, besides its elegance, its colour and gallantry!

As one reads these letters, something happens to one. The eyes wander away from the printed page; one loses oneself in a dream, as in listening to music; one sees the world through the eyes of Horace Walpole; it is his world that one sees. It is the summer of 1753 once more; George II is king, and the garden at Strawberry Hill is at the height of all its sweets; it is the hottest day of the summer and in the evening the Duc de Mirepoix, the French ambassador at the Court of St. James's, walks slowly in the *beau milieu* of Brentford Town, without any company but a brown lapdog with long ears, two pointers, two pages, three footmen and a *vis-à-vis* following him. Or it is May in 1763, and Horace Walpole is entertaining a party *al fresco* at Strawberry:—a magnificent dinner, cloaked in the modesty of earthenware; French horns and hautboys on the lawn. They walk to the belvedere on the summit of the hill, where a threatened storm only serves to heighten the beauty of the landscape, a rainbow on a dark cloud falling precisely behind the tower of a neighbouring church, between another tower and the building at Claremont. Or it is March 1766, and it is snowing in Paris where Horace is on a visit to Madame du Deffand, and clouds of dust are whisking about the streets and quays, edged with an east wind that gets under one's very shirt: "I should not be quite sorry if a little of it tapped my lilacs on their green noses, and bade them wait for their master." A few weeks later and he is at Livry in the *forêt de Bondi*, at the little pavilion where Madame de Sévigné used to write to her daughter: "on one side of the garden leading to the great road is a little bridge of wood on which the dear woman used to wait for the carrier that brought her daughter's letters."

What is it that makes the snow, or the maytime, of two hundred years ago so affecting? If we could say, we should lay our finger on the nature of poetry or music. We feel about Horace Walpole as he felt about Madame de Sévigné: it is this sense of the past, apprehended through that prism which reflects its beauty, that gives his letters, like hers, their dream-like quality. For Horace Walpole, like Proust, an aesthete to his finger-tips, was a poet: a poet who found the perfect form for his vision and experience.

A. L. ROWSE

* *Horace Walpole's Correspondence with George Montagu.* Edited by W. S. LEWIS and R. S. BROWN. Two vols. *Oxford University Press.*

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A NEW HOLY ALLIANCE

U.S. Foreign Policy. By WALTER LIPPMANN. *Hamish Hamilton.* 6s.

Walter Lippmann is America's foremost columnist, and his endeavour to give the United States a foreign policy is recognised as a political event. The American, even more than the British, public has been conditioned by a strong ethical background and an excessive sense of security; its rulers have shirked the duty of informing this idealistic public of the real forces and problems with which States in an anarchic world have to cope. Mr. Lippmann's object is to explain to the American people what these forces and problems are, and he urges the very sensible conclusion that in the immediate future the interests of America demand an alliance with Britain and the Soviet Union.

As an exposition of the power politics by which each of the animals of the jungle are forced to live, Mr. Lippmann's book can scarcely be improved. It should be compared with a similar attempt made by Machiavelli at the end of the Middle Ages. An ideal conception of a united Christendom had haunted the minds of men and an effort had been made in the Conciliar Movement to prevent the violent disruption of civilisation by providing a constitutional solution for the problem of papal supremacy. With Europe erupting into an anarchy of sovereign States, Machiavelli laid down in classical form the pattern of behaviour adopted by successful politicians. In exactly the same way Mr. Lippmann, avoiding every idealistic phrase and accepting international gangsterism as the norm of behaviour, explains to Americans how they should behave if they are not again to risk losing their share of loot.

Mr. Lippmann thinks it wise to forestall criticism by going into sackcloth and ashes for some chapters of his past. Unfortunately he chooses as a matter for repentance, not the strange period in which he supported Big Business against Mr. Roosevelt and the New Deal, but the distant moment when he welcomed the achievements of the Washington Conference. He blushes for this, because he says Britain and America there agreed to disarm each other to the advantage of Japan. By the same token he regards as a mirage all the League policy of disarmament and collective security. But here he does himself and others some injustice. The results of the Washington Conference in 1922, taken by themselves outside their setting as part of the attempt to create a new international system, were certainly unfortunate. It was mainly an effort, which in the upshot proved useful to Japan, to prevent the great Powers from beginning a race in out-of-date armaments. Mr. Lippmann has forgotten that Japan did not then seem an inevitable enemy, and that he himself had not then given up the hope of ending world anarchy. He need not apologise; to-day those who saw that the results of failure to establish an international system would be war have no cause to apologise.

Mr. Lippmann is unduly modest and sometimes forgetful. No League, he says, could succeed unless it was based on a firm alliance of great Powers. True; but then the League in 1919, as Clemenceau understood, was founded on just such an alliance between Britain and France and their satellite States as Mr. Lippmann now desires. From 1919 right up to 1936 when Hitler was allowed to fortify the Rhineland, Britain and France were completely masters. Further, when Mr. Lippmann complains of the Western democracies disarming, he forgets that the more realistic advocates of collective security year by year demanded that the rearmament of Germany and Japan by British and American capitalism should not be permitted to continue. It was while the armaments of the peaceful Powers were still overwhelmingly powerful that League supporters tried to stop aggression in Abyssinia. This was realism, and if we are now all forced to think in the cruder terms of power politics, that is not because the younger Mr. Lippmann was wrong, but because he and we failed in time to persuade his more recent friends of the necessity of a realistic policy.

Mr. Lippmann should reconsider this story and ask whether, in fact, the very forces that wrecked the alliance which was the nucleus of the League of Nations are any less threatening to the foreign policy he now urges. Let me summarise his thesis. Given, he says, a world of great sovereign States, a country which wishes to be "solvent" in its foreign policy must be conscious of its commitments and so firm in its alliances that there can be no question of its capacity to fulfil by diplomacy if possible and by war if not. In chapters of superb lucidity, Mr. Lippmann shows that the early Fathers of America were far from repudiating entangling alliances with Britain and France, when they were expedient, and were perfectly conscious that American security lay in the power of the British Navy. During the last three-quarters of the nineteenth century this unacknowledged alliance with Britain was hidden from the American public, which therefore failed when the naval power of Germany and Japan challenged that of Britain, to bring American power into relation with American commitments. In the last resort Americans have been prepared to kill and die rather than allow a foreign invader to occupy any part of the American Continent or dominate the west coast of Europe; they have also taken on as a commitment the defence of the Philippines and so involved themselves in any war in the Pacific. Mr. Lippmann argues that America has always been involved in war among the great Powers, and it is time that Americans after nearly half a century of delusion should make their foreign policy solvent by openly admitting their inevitable alliance with Great Britain and with Russia, with which they have in practice been forced into military collaboration, in spite of ideological objections, once to Tsarism and recently to Bolshevism.

If Americans had understood this thesis in 1919 instead of retiring to a bomb-proof shelter and preaching sermons to the rest of the world, the United States would have been a member of the League and so fulfilled Mr. Lippmann's conditions of security. Its effective allies would have been Britain, France and their satellites; their joint armaments would have been ample for the inescapable commitments of preventing the success of aggression in any part of the world. It is to be noticed from Mr. Lippmann's own thesis that his short list of American commitments is misleading, for if world peace is to be kept by three Powers, America will, as he admits, always be involved in any important dispute in any part of the world. Mr. Lippmann's proposal is, in fact, to re-establish a new Holy Alliance, differing from the League of Nations in leaving out the fiction of legal equality among the Powers (which was never wise and never an important reason of failure) and in omitting also those forward-looking aspects of the Covenant, which were never developed, though they might, theoretically at least, have tempered international anarchy by inculcating the habit of peaceful settlement and of accepting judicial decisions of international disputes. Mr. Lippmann's final emphasis on his alliance as a nucleus suggests that he may not be so determined an anarchist as he presents himself as being, and he perhaps cherishes some of the same hopes that were voiced by Woodrow Wilson and Lord Cecil when the League was founded. But he saves himself by stating that there is no such thing as perpetual peace; we must be content with a relative and temporary security.

Mr. Lippmann is too clear a thinker not to know that he has omitted half the picture. Why did the alliance at the basis of the Geneva League break down? And why did these strong Powers not act, as he presumably hopes that the new alliance would do? He assumes in this book that the interests of States and peoples are identical and territorial, and he talks as if the only cause of war was aggression on the part of one or other of the nations which do not belong to the political group he wishes to create. He says nothing of the power of great business combines which are not confined within national boundaries; yet they armed after the last war the States which were not within the peace alliance, and they continued to do so, in spite of innumerable protests from democrats, until the very shells they had supplied destroyed the men and ships of the United States Navy in Pearl Harbour. The strength and international character of modern capitalism makes any book that deals purely with the power politics of sovereign States entirely unrealistic, and I presume that Mr. Lippmann avoids all discussion of the economic and psychological causes of war because it would destroy the symmetry of the case which he very naturally wishes to explain to the American people. Mr. Lippmann, indeed, omits all the complications. In discussing American commitments he points out that those who would defend Brazil must also ensure their security in the African bulge, from which an attack might take place against Brazil. This is the realistic and military argument which has always been used by imperialist Powers to justify their expansion; and it would be interesting to know whether Mr. Lippmann has carefully talked about this side of the matter with Frenchmen. When he assumes that on grounds of realism America and Britain must always be allies because they jointly guard the Atlantic basin, what reply has he to those influential Americans who were quite ready before the war for the Western seaboard to be in the hands of Germans rather than British? Presumably if the Germans had conquered Britain in 1940, all the arguments which make Britain and America allies could have been used for American-German friendship. Mr. Lippmann knows the answer. That was impossible because of the nature of the German regime. Responsible Americans knew they could trust the British not to desire further aggression and they could have no such trust in the Nazis. In other words, America's reasons for preferring Britain to Germany were at root ideological, and though the picture may be simple and compelling if it treats States as homogeneous centres of power with no special ideologies or motives apart from those of power, such a thesis will, in fact, fall to the ground as soon as it is analysed. Can one assume, as Mr. Lippmann does, that ideology can be dismissed in considering an American-Soviet Alliance? The very perfection of Mr. Lippmann's picture as a simple account of the behaviour of States only serves to heighten the unrealistic character of any account of world politics to-day which omits the economic and ideological causes of war, and which attempts to found peace on the supposed interests of Governments to the exclusion of the common sympathies and interests of peoples.

KINGSLEY MARTIN

A VICTORIAN LADY

Charlotte M. Yonge. By GEORGINA BATTISCOMBE. *Constable.* 15s.

Only three weeks ago an excellent critical account of Charlotte Yonge appeared in these columns, and now here is a whole new book about her. Mrs. Battiscombe has not succeeded in finding much new information, but there are some interesting extracts from unpublished letters to Christabel Coleridge (the first biographer of Miss Yonge) who seems to have destroyed all the other material she had used. An introduction by Miss Delafield gives evidence of the intense interest still excited by Miss Yonge's novels—mostly, one suspects, among survivors from Victorian nurseries. But the other day one of the most accomplished modern novelists, who had been reading her for the first time, spoke to me with the warmest admiration of her technique. I have not read enough of her books to discuss usefully her art, but I have enjoyed Mrs. Battiscombe's biography and can recommend it to everyone interested in the Victorian ethos, for circumstances made Charlotte Yonge a representative, almost a caricature, of that almost extinct creature, the Victorian lady.

Her parents belonged to the country gentry

class whose younger sons became sailors or parsons or even doctors. Her father was a soldier who resigned his commission upon marriage to please his mother-in-law. He devoted his consequent leisure to managing a small estate and to building a church, sacrificing such recreations as travel to the latter expensive purpose. He educated his daughter himself. Mrs. Battiscombe suggests that she remained a spinster because her home life was "almost too happy": the psychologist would rather put it that she suffered from a fixation on her father. In consequence she remained emotionally an adolescent, as Miss Delafield points out, and her photographs show her in middle age as still child-like. In this she resembles Ruskin, but whereas he remained always the spoilt child of indulgent parents, a severe upbringing left Miss Yonge hidebound and timid. At the same time she was shrewd, strong-willed and very certain of her own rightness. A letter suggests that her daughterly feelings were not purely affectionate:

> And then the being religious intellectually rather than spiritually and the way in which unhappiness aggravates one's temper, and one behaves worse to those to whom it would seem most impossible, I know it all, and I am afraid it is all in me still, though the opportunities for struggling and showing temper are, alas, ended . . . Let me tell you what I do think did help me, and was Mr. Keble's advice. I used always to object to whatever anyone proposed, and he advised me to keep an account, by a pinprick on a piece of paper, of every time I did it. . . .

think "anyone" here means her mother; but it is significant that she habitually suffered "agonies of apprehension" when she imagined her father ill or dead. Such irrational fears are commonly the disguise for strongly suppressed wishes. Her novels inculcate an unquestioning obedience to parents that strikes the modern reader as positively immoral, and she carried her own filial piety to similar excess.

As a child she had been forbidden by her mother to enter any of the cottages at Otterbourne, and although the prohibition hindered her greatly in her parish work and cut her off from her beloved school children when once they had grown up, she kept the rule till the day of her death at the age of seventy-seven.

is possible, of course, that she preferred to keep out of the cottages. For all her life she suffered from shyness—"she would be perfectly at her ease reading Shakespeare with a kitchen-maid, but she could not manage even the civility of a 'good-day' to the same girl if they were to pass each other an hour later in the village street." But I think deference to authority was her ruling passion, even though sometimes a part of her revolted against it; and this deference at once confined and supported her, like swaddling bands lined with cotton wool.

A second "father-figure" was provided by Keble, vicar of the neighbouring parish of Hursley. When she was fifteen he prepared her for confirmation, an experience that remained the capital event of her emotional life. So long as he lived he was her literary adviser as well as her confessor. Sometimes her indelicacy incurred his censorship. Thus a character in *Heartsease* remarked that she really had a heart, though some people thought it only a machine for pumping blood: Mr. Keble erased this as "coarse." But such interventions were seldom necessary, and she was herself shocked even by Miss Austen: "How much we see the improvement in society since those days!" One further fact is characteristic of Miss Yonge's refinement: she never learnt to ride or to drive a horse, pursuits that were almost universal among the women of her time and class.

Destined by her childhood to celibacy and cut off by this muffish refinement from any physical activity more vigorous than a gentle stroll, she happily found various channels for self-realisation—first, religion of the sober early Tractarian order, secondly writing, thirdly teaching girls. Her novels welled from her subconscious, and she describes how her characters took charge of their own lives, deviating from her intentions. These stories are the daydreams of a lonely girl who yearned to belong to a large family, but they are also informed with one supreme purpose: "I have always viewed myself as an instrument for popularising church views." Her industry was superlative. "She would have three manuscripts on her desk at the same time, a novel perhaps, a historical work, and a book of religious teaching, and she would write a page of each in turn, going from one to the other as she waited for the ink to dry." She also edited a magazine for girls, taught in Sunday school, collecting wild flowers or shells for the benefit of her pupils, corresponded with eminent churchmen, and read enormously. In such a life there was no room for recreation. She rarely went to London, and only once did she venture abroad. This was to stay with Guizot, whose daughter wished to translate her books. Evidently the notorious amours of the veteran statesman with Mme. de Lieven had remained unknown at Otterbourne.

There are two simplified views of Victorian life. Read for instance Miss Moberly's *Dulce Domum*, which describes the circle in which Miss Yonge moved, and even though amused you can hardly fail to be charmed. The sincere unselfishness expressing itself in a constant consideration as well as in good works; the love of knowledge shown alike in serious reading and in such recreations as botanising and digging up barrows; the love of beauty, very genuine though usually limited to Gothic architecture, to ecclesiastical music, to poetry and above all to scenery—this is a world from which all harshness and baseness and vulgarity have been eradicated with an astonishing completeness. On the other hand this gentle, secure, disciplined life was hardly available except to comfortably off persons living in the country. A kind woman like Miss Yonge could be a bigoted conservative, because she hardly realised the existence of an urban proletariat, still less the conditions that made child-prostitution and incest inescapable. Moreover, must there not have been usually an element of hypocrisy in all this mildness? That Miss Yonge chose and enjoyed celibacy I do not doubt, but the violence of prudery then fashionable must have brought blank misery to many girls, just as the obligatory practice of religion must have oppressed those not gifted with Grace. Ivy darkens the never opened windows, layer upon layer of underclothing weigh down the unexercised bodies. Nor are minds and hearts less muffled or better ventilated: every sentiment or phrase or action must be judged by the rigorous criticism of "niceness." Nevertheless living in an age that has returned to savagery can one dismiss the Victorian ethos as merely contemptible? "Even to-day," Mrs. Battiscombe remarks, "Charlotte Yonge's books produce a peculiar effect; suddenly the reader is possessed by a most unexpected and disturbed longing, the longing to be good." To the Victorians there was nothing unexpected or disturbing in such a longing; it was usual among the earnest agnostics no less than among the followers of Keble. To-day even the most self-sacrificing champions of a better society often appear governed as much by hatred as by love. And self-sacrifice itself is quickly diagnosed as a product of masochism. Miss Yonge was a saint as well as a lady, and like many saints she was neurotic, narrow and in some ways unattractive. But it is easier to explain her opinions and her conduct than to share her effective longing to be good.

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THE LARGER HOPE

Writers in Crisis. By MAXWELL GEISMAR. *Secker and Warburg.* 16s.

This is a rather hectoring commentary on the American novel in the years between 1920 and 1940, and one has to learn the arts of ducking and dodging while the author rams the same point home over and over again. His style is another difficulty. I am not fond of the new mechanised English which reminds me, for example, of my "societal duties" instead of my duties to society. I mention these janglings straight away because they may deter other English readers, as they deterred me at first; and this would be a pity because Mr. Geismar is an illuminating writer on his special ground.

The theme of Mr. Geismar's book is a familiar one: the separation of the artist from society in the 'twenties and his return to the fold, Salvation Army fashion, in the last decade. Ring Lardner, William Faulkner, Thomas Wolfe, Hemingway, Dos Passos and John Steinbeck progressively illustrate his argument, and of these the first three fail to turn up behind the banner. Lardner went babbling his fooleries to an early death and there were no signs of reformation in him. The instance of Lardner, by the way, surely indicates one of the dangers of judging a writer largely by his relation to his time. There was no need to invoke the Jazz Age in order to place him. Is there not an ancient tradition of American cynicism and flat-voiced clowning, which goes back beyond Twain to the Frontier and even to the shrewdness of *Poor Richard's Almanac*? Thomas Wolfe, a natural Holy Roller, had, of course, a hectic salvation instinct, but he also died too soon. Only Faulkner is left to go on sinning alone, and to have one hell of a time—if I remember Mr. Geismar's delightful phrase rightly: I forgot to note the page—among "the sweet perversities of infancy." But Hemingway, Steinbeck, and Dos Passos remain to follow the banner of redemption; or—a better metaphor—to jump out of the exotic but exiguous guilt of private pleasure and despondency into the warm blanket of the larger hope. It is not for us to mock. The same has happened in Europe, where we too search for the assurance of a democratic myth and a retrieved humanity. The value of Mr. Geismar's criticism is that it helps us to see the American conversion in perspective, and distinguishes between the sentimentality and the solid trend. His belief in the American genius is excellent and it is acutely stated, without uplift and without that boring toughness which has so often misled Europeans.

At first one resists the notion that American writers were so separate from their society. We know all about the expatriates. But one's impression was that the writer had a greater prestige and a wider function in America than he had in Europe, and especially in England. He combined the roles of reporter, teacher, preacher and aristocrat. He was marked by the accent of his town. One was struck by the strong national domesticity of American writers one met. If anyone was "in life" they were. Naturally they carped and rebelled. Sinclair Lewis jeered, Hemingway hated, Dos Passos argued and Steinbeck preached successively the merits of the asylum, sex and riot. But the impression was—and it was a liberating one—of those American families where the children boss and shout down their parents; it was just family life and it seemed an astonishingly free life for an artist to be living. And here lies an important point of difference between the European writer and the American, a difference which Mr. Geismar has penetrated. The European writer did not belong to his society in the same way. He did not wish to belong to it. He was not free; he did not wish to be free. He belonged to his literary tradition and the pattern of his culture. The weight and direction of Literature, with its capital L, was on him, urging him to reflect before he wrote. That tradition, not the peculiar domestic friendliness of life, was the conserver of his humanity. He was an instrument. There was no homely alternative to the containing and formative authority of civilisation, for we are just as likely to hate mankind as to love them if we let ourselves slide merely into living among them, rubbing along with them and bumming around. But I ought to quote Mr. Geismar:

> In the midst of spiritual distress, the European maintains an emotional balance; compassion still colours his indignation; and beneath his malaise there is still the sense of love, for home, land and people, which is wanting in the American. And if the European to-day is also the rebel, and the exile from his native tradition, as Silone, Malraux or Koestler, he may yet, as Koestler does, find his commonality with all the breeds of men linked together, Le Vernet his new homeland; while the American can often find none with his own free and thriving countrymen. Without a feeling of place, it was difficult for our writers in the 'twenties to feel any genuine affection for its inhabitants.

For American individualism—Mr. Geismar reminds us of the phrase of Van Wyck Brooks—is not based on a sense of character or the appreciation of personality: "No, our individualism is the superiority of one individual over another, the effort to manipulate rather than to understand our neighbours."

Yet there is a humane American genius and Mr. Geismar goes for what signs of it he can see in the novelists whom he discusses. He is under no illusions about Hemingway or Steinbeck, but he does see the solid ground beneath the sentimentalities of *The Grapes of Wrath* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. There is an excellent remark about the sense of leisure and space in Hemingway, which shows that Mr. Geismar can write literary criticism as well as sail away on the easy rhetoric of talk about trends. In one way, it is absurd to take the views of novelists very seriously. Hardy's pessimism is neither one thing nor the other to us now; it interests only as it influences his performance as a novelist. The optimism of Meredith tell us merely that Hardy's is not the only valid reaction to Darwin. Hemingway's link with the Twain of *Huckleberry Finn*, his extension of the vernacular tradition, is more fruitful to think about than his passing emotions about the Spanish word "Nada." It is true that American novelists of our period have been poor in reflection and recalcitrant or obtrusive in education; but much is forgiven to vitality, idiosyncrasy and talent and we owe to these novelists a new speed in the art of narrative. Even to the unrepentant Faulkner, intense to the point of final obscurity in his fixations, we owe scenes of new and enormous comic richness. Mr. Geismar has enjoyed these moments, between his sermons. And the nature of his book itself shows how much greater is the prestige of these "men without a place" in their country than English writers have in England. I know no English book on similar men that is done with the same sense of public importance. One must read Mr. Geismar to estimate the profit and loss of that; and in doing so one will discover some valuable facts about the American mind. One form that anti-Americanism takes in England is the effortless swallowing of American sentimentalities.

V. S. PRITCHETT

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nation of the past, assembles one-half of the
n which must be mastered before Australia
ceeds in working out a satisfactory policy
wards the aborigines. It explains the his-
ically-conditioned attitudes and policies of the
ite man. It does not, however, attempt to
mine the problem of culture-contact from the
int of view of aboriginal society. Therefore,
ugh it shows the bad effects of the policies
ich were actually followed, it does not give
y firm indication of alternative policies which
ght have succeeded, or which might succeed
-day. Complete guidance is impossible without
nd anthropological knowledge.

All the same, we ought to be grateful for what
s honest book does reveal. It reveals firs
all the excellent intentions of the imperial
vernment, which, under the influence of
ngelical idealism, laid down two objectives
policy: first, the assimilation of the aborigines
western and Christian civilisation; secondly,
ir admission to the full rights of British
bjects. The best of the settlers probably
gan by accepting these objectives; but very
on they found them at variance with their
y-to-day experience. On pp. 173 to 177, the
thor prints revealing excerpts from the diary
a very liberal and decent Irish settler. He
gan by admiring the aborigines, and was glad
find himself on good terms with them. When
ey began to spear his stock, he reflected:
They have as good a right to our swine as we
ve to their kangaroos." He showed no rancour
en when they tried twice to spear him. But
en more of his stock and one of his shepherds
re killed, he began to find their ways "wholly
accountable," and in time exasperation over-
me his tolerance. Under pressure of men like
s, the government lost heart about its civilising
ssion. The status of a British subject meant
the aborigine not British civil rights, which
re quite meaningless in his primitive nomadic
ciety, but the punitive operation of criminal
stice.

This book performs the service of putting out
court two popular legends which have gained
rrency. The first legend is that British
ttlers in Australia were wantonly and violently
utal towards the aborigines: acts of brutality
re exceptional. The second legend is that
e aborigines were from the start doomed to
tinction by the advancing frontier of European
ilisation. To prove this it would be necessary
prove that the Europeans made a sustained
d serious effort to understand aboriginal
ciety and to preserve it. This they never did.

Mr. Hasluck comes to one definite conclusion. He says that no particular system was ever tried "long enough or thoroughly enough" to justify anyone in saying that such and such a method was good or bad. One conclusion for present and future seems clear. No policy will ever succeed unless the Australians are patient enough to give it a long run, in despite of disappointment. But what the policy should be cannot be decided without calling in the anthropologists.

W. K. HANCOCK

Week-end Competitions

No. 710

Set by Diogenes.

Mr. Churchill's recommendation of Basic English may be thought to have excited some alarm in the Elysian Fields. Competitors are asked to compose a letter to Mr. Churchill in not more than 200 words from Sir Thomas Browne, Dr. Johnson, Carlyle or James Joyce.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, September 20th.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 707

Set by W. R.

Mr. Ezra Pound has, since Mussolini's downfall, ceased to bombinate upon the Italian wireless. Competitors are invited to suppose that he has joined Haw Haw in Berlin, and to compose an imaginary conversation between these gentlemen, in which they discuss confidently the difficulties of their occupation. Limit 200 words.

Report by W. R.

"Confidently" was a misprint for "confidentially": most entrants seem to have realised this, nevertheless the competition has been a failure—I confess it with shame, for it is doubtless my fault for having set an unrewarding task. Hardly any of the entries suggested much knowledge of the two broadcasters' styles. I recommend consolation prizes of half-a-guinea for Allan M. Laing and D. W. Barker.

Haw Haw: You know, Pound, they really believe abroad that you and I are secretly ashamed of this broadcasting job. They think we weep over our old school ties in private, and turn ghastly pale when someone plays God Save the King or The Star-Spangled Banner.

Pound: Sure they do, and instead of listening to what we're saying, the silly bastards are having pipe dreams of our being pushed around by the Hermanns and the Antonios.

Haw Haw: H'm. There's been a bit more pushing round lately. I've had to be almost rude to several brass hats. These Heinies get the wind up so easily.

Pound: Well, I hope your carpet-chewing friend has more guts than that jelly-bellied baby they've just booted out of Italy. . . . Ah, Joyce, if we could only dispense with these dictator jerks and fight the John Bulls and the Hirams over the radio . . . !

Haw Haw: Oh, but we're not doing so badly. They depend on us quite a lot; though I must say it crabs a man's style to have to bring down the house with the scripts they've handed out lately.

Pound: Those damned scripts! Give me facts: I'll find the words. It's not so bad for you: you're only a stump orator; but hang it all, I'm a poet!

ALLAN M. LAING

Haw Haw: As a pioneer internationalist, my dear Ezra, I am downright ashamed to reveal my origins. The British race is not only stupid but vindictive. There has been some talk of the gallows.

Pound: I, William, am a man who, finding a kultur, a poetry, a philosophy, a religion, in a foreign country, settled there. Later that country happened to go to war with the country I happened to have been born in. I continued to expound my views to my people, through a machine, across some water. I am thus a traitor. Had I sat in Boston Massachusetts all of the time and written it down in a book, I would be gingerly reverenced, like Croce or Tom Eliot.

Haw Haw: Our very patriotism undoes us, Ezra. We have both retained our nationalities. Had we naturalised ourselves they could not have touched us.

Pound: The Saxon races have an irresistible urge ceremonially to stifle their soul.

Haw Haw: We are martyrs, my dear Ezra, to sheer provincialism and philistinism. I shall descend through the trap with my inimitable snigger of clairvoyant derision.

Pound: Gugliemo, I beg! . . . Though one's vanity is titivated by the thought that one is high on the list of war-aims. . . .

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